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CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

THE

MODE AND THE SUBJECTS

OF

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

BY THE

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BALLYMENA.

MAGNA EST VERITAS, ET PRÆVALEBIT.

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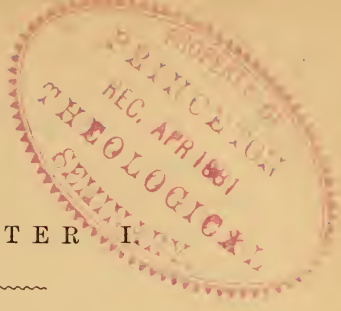
PREFACE.

I LAUNCH this little craft upon the stormy sea of controversy, commending it to the care of Him who rules the raging waves, and can speak a summer calm on the troubled waters of human thought. If, indeed, it carries His royal and eternal truth, I humbly pray Him to fill its sails with a favouring breeze, that it may waft His light and knowledge to many a heart perplexed, to many a wavering mind. This little venture is no fireship sent forth to burn, wreck, ruin, and destroy; it is rather the quiet merchantman, laden to the water's edge with the peaceful fruits of Christian thought; and its garnered "gold, and frankincense, and myrrh," I bring forth, and I lay them reverently at the feet of Him who was once Himself a little child, and who, with tender heart and loving lips, on the eve of His return to the Mediator's throne within the skies, speaking

as the Elder Brother, enjoined on the apostles, as their most sacred duty, the feeding of His lambs. I plead my right to "Feed His lambs" in the green pasturage of the fold of God—to bring within the range and reach of the children of believing Christian parents the benefits of discipleship, and my response to the command will always be—"Thy lambs, Lord, I *will* feed with tender hand and loving heart." And wafted from the deep, blue sky, there comes to each succeeding generation in the Church of the Redeemer this question, "Lovest thou me?" and, linked to it, this command, "Feed my lambs."



CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

"This great and dangerous impostor, Prejudice, who dressing up falsehood in the likeness of truth, and so dexterously hoodwinking men's minds as to keep them in the dark, with a belief that *they* are more in the light than any that do not see with *their* eyes."—LOCKE.

ERRONEOUS opinions are prejudgments or prejudices. A prejudice is a decision of the mind formed without due examination of the premises on which it rests, and is the result of a misguided education, combined with mental idleness or indifference. Men are stongly inclined to cling to heirlooms of error and ignorance, as if their salvation depended on their walking in hereditary darkness, and thus many retain and cherish the prejudices of their fathers with a loyalty worthy of a better cause. As a mother loves most tenderly her imbecile child, so the mind, warped by prejudice, forgets the grand

truths of the faith in cradle conceits and dogmas of a painful sectarianism, pushing them forward as its distinctive creed—its vitalizing Christianity. The shadow of a twig it mistakes for the substance of the tree of life, and with the crooked claws of blinded bigotry gathers fancied fruit. How sad that men should regard the shibboleth of their party as the vocabulary of the faith, and magnify a mole-hill into an Alpine mountain. Little things, under the microscope of prejudice, assume gigantic proportions, and fill up the horizon of the zealot, who sees nothing so clearly, hears nothing so distinctly, and believes nothing so firmly, as he sees, hears, and believes his favourite crotchets. He abjures the manly aspiration, "Oh, that mine were the deep mind, prudent, and looking on both sides!" He is so rivetted to his own peculiar views that he is most unwilling to be taught the deceptive seemingness of his traditionary prejudices, but he prides himself in his singularities, and hugs his cherished whims as the debauchee his evil habits. Yet man should be what Plato calls him, "a hunter of truth;" and as truth and error lie in his way, he should

rather court than shun and censure the examination of conflicting opinions. Controversy, when carried on in a candid, earnest spirit, is like the ploughshare that furrows the fallow field, and prepares it for the reception of the seed, and there are no regrets about the ploughing of spring in the reaping of the golden grain of autumn.

As the professions of a prince, when a crown is at stake, are but a slender security for the preservation of friendship and honour, so the most solemn averments of candour and impartiality, on the part of a controversialist, are valueless pledges for unbiassed reasoning. A certain Anabaptist polemic, with the air of an emperor or of a something still higher and haughtier, grandly exclaims, "I have written for eternity;" "I have from first to last proceeded as if I were on oath. I have never allowed myself to use artifice, or to affect to despise an argument which I have found myself unable to answer." "I have not given an evasive or sophistical answer." A critic, perversely wicked, might say that this self-certified laudation may mean that the writer has so adroitly mingled assertion and argument that the

reader must receive it all as oracular, or it shall lose its sweetest charm and its most potent influence; that he must not ask a solitary question, but shut his eyes, open his mouth, and swallow all that is laid on his tongue. This is a style of reasoning very convincing with some people, as the writer acquires a mental mesmeric influence over the weak will and the soft brain, and is forthwith elevated to the chair of infallibility. But dogmatism should not exercise any influence on the mind of the intelligent reader. Let arguments be examined and weighed, and if they are "found wanting," let them be rejected as unworthy a moment's parley, but if they are of standard weight, they should be received and treasured. Every man is bound to free his own nature from confusion and doubt, and he should not take truth on hearsay, but think for himself.

In the world of nature Divine power is not employed to supersede man's agency. God gives us fertile fields and fruitful seasons, but He does not sow our seed in spring, nor weed our crops in summer, nor reap our grain in autumn, leaving us to vegetate in idleness and sloth. He sends

the time of sowing and of reaping, and these we must embrace or starve; for He never meant that clothes should grow upon our back, or that bread should fall upon our table in newly baked loaves. And as in the world of providence so also in the world of truth, moral and religious. The Bible is no system of arranged dogmas, no ready made mould of faith, into which we are to pour our thoughts without either effort or examination. We must read and study the Book to learn the length and breadth of all commanded duty, to acquire the knowledge that is "power," to pass from the vestibule to the sacred shrine in the temple of wisdom. Articles of faith are necessary, and although the Holy Spirit has not dictated any creed as such, and sent it down to earth for man's guidance in religion, He has given him in the Bible a precious mine, where the earnest student may dig out, by thought unbiassed and by prayer sincere, the gold of faith and truth. Here he discovers the little rill of mercy wandering through the ancient world, and as he follows its course, he finds it gradually increasing in volume until it becomes a summer river of eternal love,

and flows in solemn grandeur through the city of our God. The reader will find himself amply repaid in cultivating studious intercourse with the thoughts that strew and star the pages of the oldest and yet the freshest Book in all literature; and he will gather doctrinal truths that shall prove, in dark and stormy days, pillars to which faith and hope may cling. A mind without a creed is like a nation without laws, like a cloud tossed about by the fickle wind, and made the sport of every storm. It is like a ship without a flag, a house without windows, a vineyard unwalled and undefended.

In drawing up the articles of our faith, it is not necessary that we have direct precept or authoritative example for every doctrine of our belief, as it would be bold and presumptuous in man to dictate to God as to the way in which He ought to communicate instruction to His creatures. "Thus saith the Lord" can preface an inference from Scripture as well as a precept of Scripture, and if the inference be correct, it comes clothed with as much authority as if it appeared as an express command on every page of the

Bible. Let those who stumble at an inference drawn from an admitted truth ponder on the Lord's mode of reasoning with the Sadducees.

As a sect, the Sadducees denied the doctrine of the resurrection, and some of them, desirous of perplexing the Saviour, came to Him and said, "There were with us seven brethren; and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? *God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.*" (Matt. xxii., 25-32).

In entering upon the examination of the sub-

ject of Christian Baptism, we claim the right of drawing inferences from known and admitted truths, and of introduing them into court as evidence to be subjected to a careful and dispassionate examination. Let the objector remember that the Lord employed an inference to refute and silence the cavil of the Sadducees, and that he, therefore, should pause and reflect before he reject an inferential conclusion.

Among contested topics there are few, if any, that stand forth with the same painful prominence as Christian Baptism. Over the font, as over the body of a king on a battlefield, polemic warriors meet and grapple, striving for mastery. The one party plants the foot ecclesiastic on infancy, and sinks the font in the tank, but the other, believing that the Good Shepherd, who "gathers the lambs with his arm and carries them in his bosom" (Isaiah xl., 11), will not shut them out of the fold, brings little ones to the Elder Brother in baptism, and thus entrusts them as spiritual wards to the fostering care of the church. Cold, cruel, and lacking the lovingness of Christianity is the denial of baptism to clinging and

guileless childhood, as if childhood were a curse, a crime against nature and God; and mean and base is the spirit of manhood that, glorying in its developed faculties, tramples disdainfully on helpless innocence.

In such a sad turmoil of opinions regarding the church standing of children, the only and final arbiter is the Bible, and men go to this mirror of truth, and looking into it, some say they see none who are incapable of intelligent belief permitted to enter the water of baptism; but others affirm that they perceive children as well as adults, and that the water of baptism falls on the brow. Then the one party accuses the other of looking through the fingers of prejudice, but the charge is quickly retorted, and too often with sturdy and venomous vigour. Whom shall we believe? Both views cannot be correct. It might be well if we would travel over the disputed ground, and take notes of our journey, and judge for ourselves.

CHAPTER II.

IDENTITY OF THE JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

THE principle that underlies Christian baptism is the fact of the existence or non-existence of a church in Patriachal and Jewish times, and the relation it held to the Church of the Christian era. The term Church denotes any number of men associated together, who make a public profession of the true faith, and among whom discipline is exercised. Accepting this definition as correct, we conclude there was a church under the ancient economy, and that it was essentially identical with the Christian Church. The visible church has passed through three distinct periods of existence—the Patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian—but it has been always virtually, vitally one and the same, as childhood, and boyhood, and manhood are the same, which, while they mark off separate stages of growth, expansion, development, have the life, the personality, remaining

unchanged. The evidence of the identity of the church in all ages and under all dispensations lies in the following facts:—

1. From the earliest times men have assembled at stated and recognized intervals for the worship of God. Cain and Abel came together "in the process of time" (Gen. iv., 3), literally, at the end of days, or on the Sabbath of the week, bringing offerings unto the Lord. The ancestral family, consisting of Adam and Eve and their children, formed the visible church in the infancy of the race.

2. The Patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian Churches held the same doctrines of faith, with this distinction that the earlier dispensations did not possess them in the same fulness of revelation as the later economy. The Jew had the oak in the acorn—the Christian has it in its perfect growth and full maturity. The traveller, who starts on a journey while day is dawning, has the same kind of light, though not in the same degree as when, hours after, the sun has climbed the heavens, and is shining down in meridian splendour; and in like manner the early saints enjoyed the same

kind of spiritual light that we enjoy, only they lived in the dim twilight and brightening sunrise of the day of grace and revelation, whereas it is our happier lot to live in the rich noontide of the Gospel. As there is but one sun and one light, so there has been but one true religion in the world, and it has been always the same—its principle is faith, and its practice purity. Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the other worthies of the olden time, lived and died in faith, and the religion of a Jew was in its spirit and vitality the religion of a Christian. The Jew was saved through faith in the atoning blood to be shed as the Christian is in the blood that is shed; he had the same moral law, the same gracious promises, the same spiritual experiences, and what was merely ceremonial, and, therefore, evanescent in his economy, has found its fulfilment in Christ, and has fallen into disuse; but as a man is not changed though he change his clothes, so neither was the Jewish Church altered in its essential elements when it threw off its ceremonial drapery, and stood forth free and glorious, arrayed in the spiritual beauty of

the New Testament dispensation. Then the boy became a man, and put away childish things; then the bud opened into the flower, fair and fragrant; but the bud contained the flower, and both bud and flower grew upon the same stalk.

3. The Patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian Churches have had the same covenant of grace. To our fallen first parents God gave the cheering promise, when He addressed the subtile and deceiving serpent in the words of doom, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Gen. iii., 15). This prophecy contained in embryo all spiritual blessings which future revelations but unfolded. In the Abrahamic covenant God said, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." (Gen. xvii., 7-8).

This covenant contains promises and blessings that belong alike to the Jewish and Christian churches, and, omitting the clause that gives Canaan as an inheritance, it is the Gospel covenant, as is evident from the words of the Apostle, "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Gal. iii., 8), and "This I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." (Gal. iii., 17). The covenant of grace was contained in the promise of a victorious seed given to our great ancestors, and this promise underlay the patriarchal church, but in the days of Abraham a clearer revelation of the covenant was made, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed," and, "I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee," which the Apostle calls the Gospel, the good news of salvation. These promises or this Gospel preached prophetically to Abraham, Paul terms "the covenant

that was confirmed of God in Christ," and says that the law, which was given afterwards, did not and could not disannul it. The Jewish Church had the Gospel by anticipation or promise, the Christian Church has it as an accomplished fact realized centuries ago, and since the Gospel is essentially the same in all ages and under all dispensations, the Jewish and Christian Churches, being both founded on the same Gospel, must be intrinsically one and the same.

4. The Apostles never admitted that, when they became Christians, they left the true Jewish Church, but invariably asserted that the unbelieving Jews had departed from the ancient faith as a progressive revelation and religion. The disciples of our Lord claimed union and fellowship with the church of Abraham; and Paul, checking the growing pride of the Roman Christians, says, "If some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert graffed in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee."

(Rom. xi., 17-18). Here the church is compared to an olive tree with branches, all depending upon a common root, which represents the great Abrahamic promise, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed," or "I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee."

5. The Patriarchal and Jewish Churches were not without discipline, which, though not so strict as that in the Christian church, still deserved the name, as it bore the character of, discipline. Adam, Eve, and their children formed the infant church, but after the murder of Abel, God drove from His presence the man whose hands were red with blood; for the inspired historian says, "Cain went out from the presence of the Lord" (Gen. iv., 16)—that is, he left the place where the church dwelt, and where Divine worship was celebrated. Discipline was also exercised in the church that was in the family of Abraham. Ishmael mocked the child of promise, and God confirmed the sentence of excommunication, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac." (Gen. xxi., 10). Again, Esau, as

a "profane person," who had despised his birthright, was cut off from the Church, which was thereby restricted to the family of Jacob; and in later days the God of Israel carried out in a fearful manner the sentence of excision against the Ten Tribes for their idolatry, and sent them forth, as He had sent forth Cain, to wander through the wide world.

6. The sixth feature of resemblance between the Jewish and Christian Churches is, that both have an initiatory rite. As the sign of an interest in the Abrahamic covenant, circumcision formed the door of admission into the Jewish Church, as baptism does into the Christian. The Mosaic law of circumcision was, "When a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it, and he shall be as one that is born in the land; *for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.*" (Ex. xii., 48.) A Jew, and also a Gentile proselyte, were admitted to the passover only after circumcision, and the passover was a religious feast, as it is called "a passover to the Lord," so that circum-

cision opened the way to the enjoyment of the privileges of "the congregation of the Lord."

7. There was in Israel what the Scriptures call "the congregation of the Lord," and which Stephen, even after the formation of the Christian Church, designates "the church in the wilderness." (Acts vii., 38.) As members of this congregation or church the fathers "received the lively oracles to give unto us." They had a place sacred to the worship of God in the tabernacle, and afterwards in the temple; they had religious rites; they had the blood typical of atonement, and numerous sacrifices, all foreshadowing the coming Saviour, and teaching the doctrine of imputed righteousness. Fidelity to God and holiness of life were enjoined on every Israelite as a member of "the congregation of the Lord." "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." (Ex. xix., 5, 6.) "*Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy.*" (Lev. xix., 2.) "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord

thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul: To keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good? Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is. Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day. *Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart,* and be no more stiffnecked." (Deut. x., 12-16.) "*And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul,* that thou mayest live." (Deut. xxx., 6.) Will any one venture to deny, in the face of these injunctions and promises, the religious character of Israel as "the congregation of the Lord," "the church in the wilderness?" The temple at Jerusalem was the seat of Jewish worship, yet Jesus called it "My Father's house (John ii., 16)," and "The house of prayer." (Matt. xxi., 13.)

Could he have given a name more sacred, more religious, to a house dedicated to Christian worship? Yet this temple was the seat, and throne, and shrine of the Jewish faith and religion, and from its many sacred associations—from its hallowed position in Israel—from the visible glory of God revealed in it—from the fact that Christ and his disciples frequented it as a place of worship and of prayer—we are led irresistibly to the conclusion that it was, in the highest and truest sense, a religious edifice, and that the people who met in it, coming together as "the congregation of the Lord," were to be not only typically holy, but holy in heart, and mind, and spirit.

8. As a final and conclusive proof of the identity of the Jewish and Christian Churches, we have the direct testimony of Jesus. In the parable of the householder the question is asked, "When the Lord, therefore, of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall

render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, *The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.*" (Matt. xxi., 40-43). This vineyard is the visible "kingdom of God" or the church militant, which was given to Israel, but they, proving unfaithful, forfeited their right to the sacred trust, lost their ecclesiastical character, and "the kingdom of God" was taken from them, in accordance with Christ's words, and transferred to the Gentiles. But the transfer did not make "the vineyard" a new "kingdom of God." It remained the same, only there was a change of husbandmen; the Jews were cast out, and the Gentiles took their place. Let the Anabaptist, as a man of honesty and candour, as a man fearlessly searching after truth, loving it for its own sake, and not permitting prejudice to blindfold his intellect or pervert his judgment, give its true and proper

weight to this declaration of our Lord; let him bear in mind that our Saviour, who never did, and could not from His nature, lead astray with false or deceptive statements, affirmed that the Jews had "the kingdom of God," but that, in consequence of faithlessness, they were about to lose it, and that it was to go to the Gentiles, unchanged, unaltered in anything that touched its character or affected its constitution as "the kingdom of God." With the words of Jesus burning in his memory, let him venture, if he dare, to deny the vital oneness of the Jewish and Christian Churches, and strive to sever, with an Alexander's sword, if such he can command, the Gordian knot that, tied by Jesus' fingers, unites the Jewish and Christian dispensations, and binds them into the one visible church. It is enough for us to know that Christ has said that the Jews had "the kingdom of God," and that it was to be taken from them and given to the Gentiles; we rest upon these plain and simple words, and defy all Anabaptist subtilty to shake our faith in Jesus' testimony, and we shall not blush to be caught confessing our belief in the

Jewish Church as "the kingdom of God," and in its essential identity with the Christian Church as that "kingdom of God" transferred to the Gentiles.

From the foregoing facts and revealed truths, the conclusion, beyond all cavil or doubt, is that since the Jews had a place for Divine worship; since the glory of God dwelt in it by visible symbol; since sacrifices, typical of the great redemption, were statedly offered in it; since Christ called it, "My Father's house" and "The house of prayer;" since the Jewish people, who worshipped in it, were called "the congregation of the Lord;" since the oracles of God, which the Christian Church possesses, came in part from the Jewish Church—if there is meaning in Scripture, if there is force in logic, the Jewish and Christian Churches are one and the same, as morning and mid-day are one and the same. They have had the same covenant of grace, they have had salvation by faith, and the three periods through which the visible church has passed, in the Patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian dispensations, correspond to "the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

CHAPTER III.

OBJECTIONS TO THE UNITY OF THE JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

HAVING stated the grounds of our belief in the unity of the Jewish and Christian Churches, we shall now proceed to notice the objections urged against this doctrine. We regret that our opponents, like erring Adam after the Fall, conscious of their argumentative nakedness, have hidden behind quibbles so mean, so miserable, that an ingenuous mind would scorn to touch them. "Quirks and quibbles should have no place in the search after truth." But we are not bound to make an enemy honourable before we measure weapons with him, or to see that his harness lacks no link before we bring down our ringing steel upon it. We must take him as he offers himself, and ask no vulgar and impertinent questions about the condition of his conscience, the clearness of his vision, or the healthy state of

his auditory nerve. Failing to find arguments to uphold their views, what quibbles do our opponents raise against the identity of the Jewish and the Christian Church?

1. The prophet Daniel says, "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." (Daniel ii., 44.) As this prediction was delivered during the existence of the Jewish Church, and centuries before its termination, the conclusion is drawn that the Jewish and Christian Churches are entirely distinct, and have nothing in common. In this prophecy, which is the interpretation of the king's dream, four heathen monarchies are mentioned under the figures of gold, silver, brass, and iron; and, during the reign of the iron or Roman power, the prophet says God shall set up His kingdom, which shall be as wide as the world and as lasting as time. The kingdom of God, according to Scripture usage, means the visible church in all ages, and here it represents the

church under the Christian dispensation, which is not contrasted with the Jewish economy, but with pagan and idolatrous empires. The prediction intimates no more than that in the Christian era heathenism shall be destroyed, and the Jewish Church, transformed and elevated into the Christian, shall rise upon the ruins of shattered idols, and shall endure for ever. When Messiah came in the fulness of the time, the visible church, childlike, attained full age; but as a person is the same in infancy as in boyhood and in manhood, the only difference being that he has entered upon a more developed stage of existence, so the Jewish and Christian Churches are in essence and life the same, but represent different periods in the history of God's kingdom on earth. That the Jews formed the visible church or kingdom of God in their day is certain from the express words of our Lord, who, surprised and delighted at the Centurion's faith, said, "I have not found so great faith, no, not *in Israel*. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. viii., 10-12.) The Jews were then "the children of the kingdom" or professed members of the visible church, and the church or "the kingdom" was as truly a fact in the Jewish economy as it is in the Christian.

2. The Lord said to the disciples, "Whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. xvi. 15-18.) The words "upon this rock I will build my church," are supposed to favour the fancy that the Jewish and Christian Churches have no link of union—no principles in common—but are as different and distinct as an old and a new house. Now, the truth that underlay the Jewish Church was a Messiah promised in the future; the truth that,

rock-like, is the basis of the Christian Church is the Messiah already come—"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Contemporaneously with the ministry of Christ, the Jewish Church reached a higher stage of existence—attained a more purely spiritual economy. The great promise was then fulfilled, the Promised One had appeared, and upon the doctrine that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh was built the Christian Church. The Jewish Church rested on the promise of His coming—the Christian Church rests on the fact of His accomplished advent. The two Churches mark off two eras in the development of the same kingdom; they do not represent different kingdoms, but the same kingdom at different periods of time, and are analogous to boyhood and manhood, which designate stages of progression in the life of the same individual.

3. Anabaptists argue that the Jewish and Christian Churches must be essentially different, as there was formed in Jerusalem, by the apostles, a Christian congregation, composed of Jewish converts, and yet quite distinct from the then existing Jewish Church. As Christians, the dis-

ciples met daily in the temple for prayer, and this implied that they regarded it as a fit place for them to meet in and to worship; but as the Lord had appointed baptism as the initiatory rite of the Christian economy, as distinguishing it from the Jewish dispensation which had circumcision, only those who submitted to this rite could be regarded as Christians. And when the Jewish Church, in the Divine intention and plan, passed from types and ceremonies, "the shadow of good things to come," to simple faith in the "one offering that perfects for ever them that are sanctified," and as the Jews, as members of that church, refused to accept Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, the apostles were constrained to constitute the Christian Church as outwardly distinct from the Jewish Church in its state of unbelief, thereby intimating the development of the visible Church into the region of a purer spirituality, and avowing their acceptance of the death of Christ as the shedding of the blood of a long-promised, long-desired atonement. After the resurrection of the Saviour, no Jewish Church, as such, existed under the sanction of Scripture.

The visible Church was then like a tree in spring, on which the withered luxuriance of the past year remains mingling with the young leaves of another and a richer summer, but the tree remains the same though passing into the growth and fruitfulness of another season. The grace, and life, and glory of the Jewish Church passed away from it to the Christian Church when the latter was formed, and all the spiritual promises made to Abraham and the fathers were at the same time transferred to the Church of "the last days"—of "the new covenant." The Old Testament was the Bible of the Jewish Church, yet it was not thrown aside nor supplanted by the revelation given to the Christian, but, bound up together, they form the Christian's Bible. And just as closely as that Old Testament is connected with the New, the Jewish Church is with the Christian. Not until the Gospel given to the Christian Church has been proved to be in nowise connected with the Old Testament, is it possible to disunite the Jewish and Christian Churches. As the Old and New Testaments form God's one revelation to man, so the Jewish and Christian Churches con-

stitute God's one and indivisible Church among men; for as on the Old Testament the Jewish Church was built, and on the New Testament, as the completion of the Old, the Christian Church is built, and as that Old and New Testament form but one revelation, so their respective Churches must stand in precisely the same relation to each other, and therefore make but one visible Church. Our argument is, that what the Old Testament is to the New, the very same must the Jewish Church be to the Christian. But the Old and New Testaments depend upon each other, and form one revelation, so the Jewish and Christian Churches must depend upon each other, and form essentially the one visible Church. Thus, on a basis broad and deep, defying all the logical engineering of the Anabaptist, is laid the great truth of the identity of the Jewish and Christian Churches.

CHAPTER IV.

THE JEWISH CHURCH ESSENTIALLY SPIRITUAL.

THERE never was an institution, civil or ecclesiastical, so depreciated and traduced as is the Jewish Church by Anabaptists. Perhaps they do not wittingly degrade and vilify the parent church of Christianity, the church in which was born the Saviour, the church that nursed the lyric spirit of the poet king, that called the ancient seers her sons, and claimed the oracles of God as her own peculiar treasure. We fear they are driven by the sheer necessity of their system to do injustice to "the congregation of the Lord," as day and night they strive to strip it of the very semblance of a spiritual faith, and only condescend to recognize in it a typical holiness. We have no wish to unduly exalt and extol the ancient church; we love the right too dearly to knowingly sacrifice it to the victory of a party; but, as God has ranged the truth upon our side,

duty bids us bring it forth and place it fearlessly before the face of friend and foe. We shall give our reasons for holding that the Jewish Church was not only typical of holiness, but was as truly spiritual, in accordance with the character of its economy and the fulness of its revelation, as is the Christian Church.

I. The covenant of the Jewish Church was spiritual in its nature. To free our argument from confusion, an accurate distinction should be made between the covenant of grace as the indispensable and absolute groundwork of the visible Church in every age, and the different economies under which that church has, at various times, existed. There can be no acceptable worship presented by man to God without faith in the blood of the atonement, but the knowledge of the atonement implies the previous revelation of the covenant of redemption. Abel worshipped God acceptably, and he must, therefore, have understood the spiritual meaning of the shedding of the blood of the firstlings of his flock which he offered in sacrifice to God. This knowledge was contained in the promise made to our fallen first parents of the bruising of

the heel of the woman's seed. This promise was the covenant of grace in the same sense that the acorn is the oak, or the child the man. In it lay the eventful history of redemption, waiting the process of development. God's covenant may be a simple promise of good on His part, as was the covenant of the bow in the cloud, or it may contain promises conditional on man's obedience. The covenant of grace, in its first announcement, took the simple form of a prophetic promise of a victorious seed. This covenant was as truly the basis of the Church in Patriarchal and Jewish times as it is in the Christian era. Successive revelations have, indeed, more fully unfolded its meaning, but no revelation introduced a new principle into it, or in any way modified the promise that the woman's seed should suffer, and through suffering be victorious.

The covenant of grace has been embodied in various economies, in accordance with the gradual revealing of the Divine will, and herein lies the only difference between the Patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian Churches. To Adam "the secret of the Lord" was disclosed as the bruising of the heel of the woman's seed. To Abraham the

covenant was made known with greater clearness. "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." And later in his life the revelation was still more full and explicit, and included secular blessings, as gold is mingled with alloy. "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God: walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be called Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will

be their God." (Gen. xvii., 1-8.) The covenant, as here revealed, is prefaced with the command, "Walk before me, and be thou perfect." These are sentinel words that, like the sword of the cherubim, guard the way to the blessings of the covenant; and the covenant itself contains *secular*, *ecclesiastical*, and *spiritual* promises.

1. The secular blessings in the Abrahamic covenant are contained in the promises, "I will multiply thee exceedingly;" "Thou shalt be a father of many nations;" "I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee;" "I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession." These promises were fulfilled in the secular history of the Ishmaelites, the Edomites, and the Israelites.

2. The spiritual blessings of the covenant are found in the same promises interpreted spiritually, and in the further promise, "I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee," all which belong to believers in every age and in every clime. By possessing the faith of Abraham, they, with him,

are members of the invisible church and acknowledged heirs of the heavenly kingdom. This celestial communion is not gained by mere fleshly circumcision, but by "faith which worketh by love." "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." (Rom. ii., 28-29.) And again, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also." (Rom. iv., 8-11.) "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be

by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all." (Rom. iv., 16.) All, therefore, who, circumcised, and uncircumcised, walk by faith, have a modal connection with Abraham, and are his spiritual seed. As he was saved by faith so are they.

3. The Abrahamic covenant had also ecclesiastical blessings, by which we mean blessings distinct from those that are solely secular or purely spiritual. This is the ground occupied by the Jewish Church as the visible church of God in the nation of Israel. Abraham's natural seed did, in Jacob, possess the temporal promises of the covenant, and his spiritual seed do enjoy an interest in the promises spiritually, but there were ecclesiastical advantages lying between, which were embodied in the economy of the Jewish Church, and were only attained by submitting to circumcision, and were equally within the reach of the Gentile believer and the son of Abraham, according to natural descent. The seed, according to law, were heirs of the land of

Canaan, and, by conforming to a certain external regulation, were admitted into the membership of the ancient church; and Gentile proselytes, upon receiving circumcision as the sign of the Abrahamic covenant, were also admitted into "the congregation of the Lord," although they never could become permanent landholders, or stand upon a civil equality with the Israelites.

In the promise "I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee," is found the basis of the Jewish Church, considered as an association of men professedly worshipping God; and it was on this promise that God organized the church of Israel, that He gave her religious laws, that He arranged her sacred solemnities, and disclosed the pattern of her tabernacle. The Patriarchal Church was founded on the promise of the woman's seed; the Jewish Church was built on the same promise more fully revealed; and the Christian Church rests on this promise as fulfilled and realized. The covenant of grace has been, however, always the same in its meaning, its essence, its life; but it has been gradually unfolding through the ages, slowly throwing off its

fleshly ceremonials, and attaining a more purely spiritual character. There has been but one covenant of grace; under the former economy it was shrowded in type and symbol, but Christ fulfilled these in His death, and they have, therefore, been laid aside, and have fallen into disuse.

True, indeed, the Apostle speaks of "a new covenant" which implies an "old," of "a first covenant" which implies a "second" (Heb. viii., 13; and ix., 1); but these expressions do not contrast the covenant of grace which the Jewish Church had with the covenant of grace possessed by the Christian Church. They contrast only the ecclesiastical laws and ordinances which regulate the two churches as existing under different dispensations, and the Christian Church has "a new covenant," "a better covenant," as, in its economy, the truths of redemption are more clearly seen. When Israel was brought out of Egypt, God appointed types, and ceremonies, and laws, which were to embody and direct the worship of the visible church under the Jewish dispensation, and these form "the old covenant" referred to by Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

The term covenant has a great latitude of meaning in the Old Testament. It is sometimes applied to the Ten Commandments. "And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments." (Ex. xxxiv., 28.) "And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone." (Deut. iv., 13.) Injunctions to abstain from idolatry, from violating the Sabbath, from defiling the sanctuary, and slighting revealed regulations of church worship, are called "the covenant." "But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant." (Lev. xxvi., 14, 15.) "And the Lord said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be

among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them." (Deut. xxxi., 16.)

"The old covenant," which the Jewish Church possessed, and to which the Apostle refers in the Epistle to the Hebrews, was neither more nor less than its ecclesiastical polity, and it should not be confounded with the covenant of grace, from which its symbols and its ceremonies drew their significance and life. The Jewish economy was the drapery of the covenant of grace in the Jewish Church, but it was not that covenant any more than that the dress of a man is the man himself. The "old" and "new" covenants are the Jewish and Christian economies, or the regulations or forms of worship under these dispensations, but both ceremonies or covenants rest alike on the covenant of redemption made between the Father and the Son, and in a series of revelations gradually disclosed to man as the covenant of grace.

Jeremiah, prophesying of the brighter day that awaited the Church in the Christian era, writes, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel,

and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jer. xxxi., 31-34.) The Apostle refers to this prophecy as finding its fulfilment in the Christian era, but it has thus far received only a very partial fulfilment. The fulness of the time for its accomplishment has not yet arrived, as the language of Jeremiah binds it to the conversion of literal Israel—"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with

the house of Judah: *Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt.*" Paul quotes this prophecy when writing to the Hebrews, the literal descendants of Israel, implying that in its highest sense it is connected with them, and not with the Gentiles. It is true that Gentile Christians share in the blessings of this covenant so far as these have been realized (Rom. xi., 16-27), because they are grafted on the stock of Israel, but the covenant has not yet reached its perfect fulfilment, and shall not till Israel be converted. The covenant itself is not a new revelation, but a promise on God's part that when the Jews shall be Christianized there shall be a higher morality, a purer life, a clearer knowledge of the truth in the Church.

Our argument is, that the "old covenant" of the Jewish church was the rites and ceremonies of its worship, the types and symbols that foreshadowed the coming Messiah, dim visions of an approaching deliverance. That church had "the shadow of heavenly things," but the substance that cast this shadow was the covenant of redemp-

tion, alike belonging to both churches. In "the new covenant" or constitution of the Christian Church there are some "shadows" lingering still, symbols of high truths, as the water of baptism and the bread and wine of the Supper, but the form of worship under this dispensation is more simple and spiritual, knowledge is more widely spread, and the Spirit more largely given. But while we cheerfully grant all this, we affirm that there has been one and only one covenant of grace revealed to man, that it was made known to Adam in the promise of the woman's seed, that it was further declared to Abraham in the words, "In thee shall all nations be blessed," and that upon this covenant were built the Patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian Churches.

II. The economy of the Jewish Church was essentially spiritual. This economy was "the old covenant," which is confessedly much inferior to "the new covenant," or economy of the Christian Church, but this admitted inferiority does not and cannot deprive it of the spiritual import which it unquestionably possessed. It was an economy of types to a much greater extent than is the Chris-

tian dispensation, but types have possessed in every age of the Church a sacred and solemn significance.

(a.) Circumcision, as the initiatory rite of the Jewish Church, signified the removal of sin, and was a type of regeneration. A type, in the religious sense, is a sign by which something future is prefigured. Baptism symbolizes the removal of sin by washing away, circumcision by cutting off. Both are types of regeneration, and represent an equally important spiritual doctrine. The Jews were profoundly conscious of the spiritual meaning of circumcision. It was plainly taught in the divine injunction, "Circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked." (Deut. x., 16.) It was clearly implied in the promise, "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." (Deut. xxx., 6.) On its spiritual significance rests the Divine command, "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem." (Jer. iv., 4.) Still more

plainly, if possible, the spiritual character of circumcision is taught by the Apostle Paul when he says, "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." (Col. ii., 11.) The Anabaptist strives to parry the force of this passage by saying that "the circumcision made without hands," or "the circumcision of Christ," has come in the room of Jewish circumcision. This is a gross perversion of plain truth. Either regeneration was attainable under the Jewish economy or it was not; if not, then no Jew was ever saved; if, however, it was attainable, then "the circumcision of Christ" was a fact to the Jew as well as to the Christian, and therefore the circumcision made with hands and "the circumcision made without hands" co-existed in the ancient Church. "The circumcision of Christ" does not belong exclusively to one dispensation any more than salvation does, and man, whether living in Patriarchal or Jewish times, must have received this circumcision or been regenerated before he could enter the kingdom of heaven. Jewish circumcision was a type

of "the circumcision of Christ," and the Apostle says that "Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confim the promises made unto the fathers." (Rom. xv., 8.) Circumcision was connected with the promises of God, as it was the sign in the flesh of the Abrahamic covenant which contained these promises; but it was not exhausted by the mere letter, but held, embedded in it, a great religious truth. Circumcision had a twofold import. It was the token of a covenant that, among other things, promised temporal blessings, but as the type of regeneration or circumcision of the heart it was as fully, as truly spiritual as Christian Baptism.

(b.) The Passover was essentially spiritual. This ordinance, like circumcision, had a two-fold meaning. It was both historic and prophetic. It looked back into the past and saw the angel of the Lord *pass over* the blood-marked homes of Israel in Egypt, and it looked forward into the future and beheld in Christ, as the Lamb of God, its wondrous archetype. As the symbol of the great sacrifice, it had a deep religious import. In this sense it was "a sacrifice unto the Lord in

the place which he had chosen to place his name there." (Deut. xvi., 2.) It was a type of Jesus in His death. He is distinctly called, "Our Passover sacrificed for us." (1 Cor. v., 7.) Connected with the paschal lamb there were several things that foreshadowed incidental circumstances which attended our Saviour's death. By Divine command not a bone of the lamb was to be broken (Ex. xii., 46), and an evangelist pointedly refers to this Scripture as giving the reason why the soldiers did not break the bones of Jesus, as was usually done with such as died by crucifixion. (John xix., 33-37.) Plainly, then, the paschal lamb was a type of Christ as the Lamb of God, and it possessed, therefore, an import unmistakeably spiritual.

(c.) That the Jewish Church was a religious organization is abundantly evident from the fact that holiness of life was repeatedly enjoined on Israel as forming "the congregation of the Lord." This holiness is no more typical holiness than that heaven is the earthly Canaan, or that "the circumcision of Christ" is identical with circumcision in the flesh. That Israel was

commanded to be typically holy we freely admit, but we emphatically deny that this was all that was required of them. The Lord charged them to sweep away every vestige of idolatry in the land to which they were going, saying, "Ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth." (Deut. vii., 5, 6.) This language is similar to that employed by Peter when addressing the members of the Christian Church, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." (1 Peter ii., 9.) Shortly before he died, Moses exhorted the people of Israel in these words, "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and

with all thy soul. To keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good? Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is. Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day. *Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.*" (Deut. x., 12-16.)

To assign only typical holiness to the Church in Israel, in the face of such cumulative evidence of its spiritual character and of the intensely moral duties enjoined upon its members, is a reckless denial of the plain testimony of Scripture, and we hope it is more from want of thought than from wickedness of will that Anabaptists labour to degrade the Jewish Church, striving thereby to confer an Anabaptist exaltation on the Church of the New Testament. Truth should at all times be dearer than the prejudices of sectarian bigotry; and to the unbiassed mind the truth of God's Word is that circumcision represented regeneration—that the passover was a type of

Christ in His death—that the other rites and ceremonies of the ancient Church had a like religious and spiritual import—and that upon Israel, as members of "the congregation of the Lord," solemn duties were enjoined, holiness of life inculcated, and purity of heart required.

CHAPTER V.

CIRCUMCISION AS THE TOKEN OF THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.

CIRCUMCISION was given as "the token of the covenant." Its institution is recorded with striking minuteness. "And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you, and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my

covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant." (Gen. xvii., 9-14.) Circumcision was appointed to be "the token of the covenant" in the flesh of the foreskin of the chosen people. To Abraham, however, it was more than "the token," for it is written, "Abraham received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised." (Rom. iv., 11.) It is here called "a sign" and "a seal of the righteousness of faith." "A sign" and "a token" are the same, but "a seal" rises into a higher meaning. Circumcision was "the sign" of the covenant to all Abraham's posterity in the family of Jacob, but to Abraham himself it was not only "the token of the covenant," but it was God's seal upon his body, expressive of the Divine acceptance of his faith as righteousness. To him it was more than it could be to his infant children. They, circumcised on the eighth day, received it as "the token of the covenant;" but he, having

justifying faith, received it both as "a sign" of the covenant and as "a seal" of the righteousness which he had through faith.

The covenants which the Almighty makes with man contain usually the principle of law. Law threatens punishment on disobedience. The Abrahamic covenant had a penalty attached to its infringement. "The uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, *that soul shall be cut off from his people:* he hath broken my covenant." The assent of Abraham to this covenant was not asked: God said, "I will make my covenant between me and thee," and, if the parent neglected, from any cause, to circumcise his child, it was to be "*cut off.*"

It is the favourite assertion of the Anabaptist that circumcision was not the initiatory rite of the Jewish Church, but that a Jewish child was by natural birth a member of that Church, and that this ceremony had no spiritual meaning. Over against such assertions we put the following truths.

1. Circumcision, as the door of admission into the Jewish Church, was narrower, and, at the

same time, wider than the descendants of Abraham. The Ishmaelites and the Edomites claimed the patriarch as their ancestor, and yet they were not received into "the congregation of the Lord." But Gentile proselytes, who had no such natural descent, on their submitting to circumcision, were admitted to the membership of the church. To them circumcision was the initiatory ordinance of the Jewish Church, and it was the sign of spiritual privileges merely, as Canaan was the reserved and inalienable inheritance of Israel.

2. Circumcision, as the door of admission into the ancient Church, was spiritual in its nature, as it made the person "a debtor to do the whole law." The Apostle says, "I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law" (Gal. v. 3), and "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good;" and again, "We know that the law is spiritual. (Rom. vii. 12-14.) Combine these truths. "The law is spiritual," but circumcision made Jew and Gentile, "a debtor to do the whole law;" therefore, circumcision must have had a spiritual significance.

3. Circumcision was of spiritual import, as it opened the way to the passover, a religious festival. The law of the passover was, "When a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land; *for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.*" (Ex. xii., 48.) The passover was a typical sacrifice of Christ, a feast of faith most truly, and as circumcision admitted to this spiritual feast it must have conferred spiritual privileges.

There are several objections brought against circumcision as the door of admission into the Jewish Church, which we shall now briefly notice.

1. It is alleged that circumcision could not have been the door of admission into the ancient Church, as Ishmaelites and Edomites were circumcised and yet were denied membership in the Church of the chosen people. The Ishmaelites and the Edomites were indeed circumcised, but not as the covenant seed, for the former had been

cut off from the family of Abraham, and the latter from the family of Isaac. Disinherited children have no claim on a patrimony. Jewish circumcision was "the token of the covenant," and was therefore essentially different from their circumcision, which was nothing more than a traditionary rite disconnected from the Divine promises.

2. It is argued that circumcision could not have been the initiatory ordinance of the Jewish Church as the Jewish child was by natural birth a member already, and needed not circumcision as an introductory ceremony. It is quite true that a Jewish child was entitled to circumcision, because born of parents in covenant with God, but he was not recognized as a member of the church until circumcised; and if circumcision was neglected he was no heir of the promises, no member of the church, for the law was, "The uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, *that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.*" (Gen. xvii., 14.)

3. It is asked, if circumcision was the door of admission into the Jewish Church, what became

of the female children, as they were not circumcised? We answer, the Abrahamic covenant included them through their connection with the male portion of the community. This principle runs through the genealogies of the Jews. The Old Testament regards woman as included in man, as "male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam." (Gen. v., 2.) The Jewish females, as belonging to the circumcised nation, though not themselves circumcised, enjoyed the land of Canaan and the privileges of the Jewish Church.

4. It is urged that since religion is no heirloom passing from father to son, children can have no church standing through connection with their parents. Vital religion does not, indeed, descend from father to son, and in this sense religion is not hereditary; but the parent's profession does give a certain religious standing to the child, for Paul says, "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." (1 Cor. vii., 14.) If both parents were unbelievers or heathens, their

children would be unclean, whatever that may mean; if one parent was a believer or Christian, the children would be holy, so that the position and character of the child, in the eye of even the Christian Church, is connected with, and determined by, the profession and ecclesiastical character of the parent.

5. It is said that circumcision did not bring salvation to all who submitted to it, and that, therefore, it had no spiritual efficacy. But who ever imagined that circumcision was identical with regeneration? What enlightened Christian regards baptism as a saving ordinance? Baptism admits to the enjoyment of the privileges of the Christian Church, and is typical of regeneration, but is no more that regeneration than the shadow is the substance. In like manner circumcision admitted to the membership of the Jewish Church, and symbolized "the circumcision of Christ;" but, in truth, neither circumcision nor baptism has any saving efficacy, and the former was just as regenerating, and possessed as high a spiritual meaning in the Jewish Church, as the latter does in the Christian.

The male children were circumcised on the eighth day in conformity with an oft-recurring principle recognized in the Old Testament. A peculiar sanctity was supposed to attach to the number 7. On the seventh day God ended from all His work; every seventh day was to be a Sabbath; every seventh year was to be a sabbatical year; and every seven times seven years was followed by a year of jubilee. "The new-born child was to be circumcised on the eighth day. This ordinance had its origin in the sanctity attaching to the number 7. Seven periods (days, years, weeks of years) form a cycle in which smaller or larger circles are described, to be in turn followed by new circles and a new development. Hence, the eighth period of the old formed always the commencement of a new development, and the child was to be circumcised after the first seven days had run out. By circumcision the child entered into covenant with God; he was introduced into a new world—into the kingdom of God—and a new era commenced in his life. This was to take place when, with the eighth day, a new cycle had begun." Abra-

ham was circumcised in the ninety-and-ninth year of his age, and Ishmael in his thirteenth; but in both cases the rite was performed as soon as the covenant and its token were revealed, and the law for the covenant seed was circumcision on the eighth day.

The disuse of circumcision demands a passing notice. The Christian Church was at first composed of Jewish converts, who carried with them a strong affection for all things that related to their ancient church, and they were seemingly encouraged to do so by our Lord, who said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil," or establish. (Matt. v., 17.) This was His mission. He stood between the Old and the New Testament. The Old Testament was not supplanted, but supplemented and completed by the New. The Law and the Prophets made up the Old Testament. The Law, as the revealed will of God, demanded a perfect, and, therefore, to fallen man, an impossible obedience; but the Prophets pointed to the Coming One as the Fulfiller and the Fulfilment of the Law. The Jewish Christians looked with reverence upon

everything connected with the Old Testament economy, and finding it laid down that "the covenant was to be in their flesh for an everlasting covenant," and remembering the words of the Saviour, "Whosoever shall break one of the least of these commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v., 19), they were for retaining circumcision as a perpetual ordinance in the Christian Church. No prophet had foretold its disuse. It had been given to successive generations, through many centuries, as "the sign of the everlasting covenant," and its neglect had been even threatened with the infliction of a grievous penalty. It was, therefore, natural for Jewish Christians to retain a strong affection for circumcision.

But how did the apostles regard this rite of the ancient Church? They do not seem to have forbidden a Gentile Christian to be circumcised if he desired circumcision; and Timothy, whose father was a Greek but whose mother was a Jewess, was, as a Christian, circumcised at the special request of Paul. (Acts xvi., 1-3.) But Titus, a Greek, was not "compelled to be circum-

cised." (Gal. ii., 3.) The apostolic practice appears to have been that a Gentile convert was circumcised if he wished circumcision, but if he declined to receive it he was not forced to submit.

Some Jewish Christians, however, taught that except Gentiles were circumcised after the manner of Moses they could not be saved, and they were for compelling converts from paganism to pass through the Jewish Church into the Christian. (Acts xv., 1.) This the apostles vigorously opposed, and expressly removed the necessity of circumcision from Gentile believers. The reason is apparent. As the Passover and the Lord's Supper could not rightly co-exist, neither could circumcision and baptism. They refer to the same thing, the one by cutting off, the other by washing away. Circumcision, as a painful rite, prefigured the removal of sin by the sufferings of the dying Saviour, and was a prophecy in the flesh of the agonies of the cross; baptism has no such afflictive meaning, but looks back to Christ's death as accomplished, and to the blood that was shed for the washing away of sin as the element of cleansing.

CHAPTER VI.

CIRCUMCISION AND BAPTISM ANALOGOUS.

WE may now review with advantage the ground we have travelled over. We have found that, from the very principle involved in the idea of a church, there must have been such an association from the earliest times; that the Patriarchal and Jewish Churches were much inferior in knowledge, and, therefore, much looser in discipline than the Christian Church; that they resembled a person passing on to manhood through the developing stages of infancy and childhood, but it should be remembered that growth does not affect personal identity. We have found that there was a Church or "congregation of the Lord" in the nation of Israel, and that, from the nature of the case, there could not be any number of men associated together and worshipping God acceptably except through an understood and appreciated revelation of the covenant of grace as

the way of salvation, and that this revelation of the covenant was contained in the promise of the woman's seed. We have found that, in the Jewish Church, there was an economy of worship called in the New Testament "the old covenant," and that it was greatly inferior to "the new covenant" of the Christian Church, as it consisted of types and symbols and ceremonial purifications of the flesh, all of which, however, taught, and were intended to teach, the higher purification of the soul, as is evident from the fact that moral holiness was enjoined on the members of that Church, who were to be "circumcised in heart," and "a holy nation" unto God; and this high standard was held up to them, "Ye shall be holy, as I the Lord your God am holy." And we have found that the Jewish Church had an initiatory ordinance in circumcision, which opened up the way to the enjoyment of the privileges of the Church, and that this circumcision had the same spiritual meaning to the Jew that baptism has to the Christian.

Our opponents censure us for drawing an argument from the circumcision of a child in the

Jewish Church in favour of the baptism of a child in the Christian, as they say we ought not to go to the Old Testament for the explanation of a rite that belongs exclusively to the New. They interdict us from searching in the Old Testament for any information bearing upon a New Testament ordinance, although Christ himself called the Jewish and Christian Churches the one and inseparable "kingdom of God;" yet the Anabaptist will run with might and main to pagan literature, and will ransack the Greek classics, to find out the modal meaning of a New Testament, a Christian ceremony. Did Christ say that the modal meaning of Christian baptism is to be found in heathen writings? The Anabaptist affirms that He did, as the word He employed to describe the ordinance implies that meaning, and none other. We shall have occasion to notice this point hereafter; and in the meantime we observe, that surely we have as good, nay, an infinitely better, right to consult the laws of Jewish Church membership for our guidance on points of Christian Church membership, which, for some reason or other, have not been definitely explained and

settled by Christ or his apostles, than the Anabaptist has for rushing off to pagan literature to discover the precise action involved in the word which our Lord has employed to designate Christian baptism. The Bible teaches us most plainly that the Jewish and Christian Churches are one undivided and essentially indivisible kingdom of God. Jesus has said, threatening the guilty Jewish people, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." (Matt. xxi., 43.) Here, then, is circumcision as the door of admission into the Jewish Church, and so far meaning membership; and here also is baptism as the door of admission into the Christian Church, and so far also meaning membership. As ecclesiastical rites they both denote simple membership, and yet the Anabaptist would prohibit us from going to circumcision to find out the range and principle of membership involved in baptism as a rite analogous to the circumcision of the former dispensation.

If the New Testament laid down precise and accurately defined laws, or if it gave apostolic example to regulate in every instance and under

all possible circumstances the membership of the Church, then we frankly admit that we would have no right to go to the Old Testament for information on this very important subject. But neither our Lord nor His apostles pointedly touched and explained the standing of infants under the present dispensation, for the simple reason, we think, that, as they were already recognized as members of the visible church, they were to remain as such under the new economy. We have Christ's words for the essential unity of the Jewish and Christian Churches as "the kingdom of God," and we have Old Testament authority for the reception of children into the ancient church; and we challenge our opponents to show us when and by whom they have been deprived of this privilege. In the silence of the New Testament on the subject of infant membership, we fall back on the usage of the Jewish Church, believing that God did not commit a mistake when He expressly enjoined circumcision on infants, and that the law of that Church, which is still unrepealed, sanctions the reception of infants into the Christian Church.

The Anabaptist cannot preclude us from going to and searching the Old Testament for information bearing on the membership of the Christian Church, for Paul finds "the new covenant" in the book of Jeremiah, and affirms that the Gospel was preached unto Abraham; and that the children of unbelievers are "unclean," but the children of believers are "holy"—terms borrowed from the Jewish economy, and express intensely Jewish ideas, but are also applicable to the religious position of children in the Christian era. We shall not, therefore, ask of the Anabaptist, as a favour, permission to go to the Old Testament to gather information on this subject; but, while our Lord beckons us and Paul beckons us, we rather think we shall obey them, and go to the Old Testament to discover the ecclesiastical position of children in the essentially unchanging "kingdom of God."

There are two ways of opposing the argument for infant baptism drawn from the analogy of circumcision. First, by denying the spiritual nature of circumcision, which denial we have shown to be a stupid, wicked, wilful perversion of

Scripture, and could only be resorted to by those who would sink the integrity of truth in bigoted sectarianism. The second way is by admitting the spiritual nature of the Abrahamic covenant and its sign, and then affirming that the whole of circumcision must apply to baptism, or a reason must be shown to the contrary. This is the Goliah argument of the Anabaptist system; and it is made to strut and swagger with an air of prodigious importance between the hostile hosts, and is petted, and fondled, and fêted by Anabaptists. We shall try the might of its arm, and the strength of its mail.

1. It is said that as the servants of Abraham were commanded to be circumcised, if the law of circumcision rules baptism, then the Christian master should baptize his servants. Before we are called upon to reply to this sophism, for sophism it is, the Anabaptist is bound to prove that servants in the Christian era occupy precisely the same social position as they did in Abrahamic times. The family of Abraham God intended to be the Church, the sole depository of His Word, the witness to His Unity, the bearer of the lamp of truth in a

world of error and darkness. No Christian family occupies exactly this ground. Besides, servants were not then as now, perpetually changing masters, but remained in and belonged to the house, and by their permanency of servitude were incorporated into the family. Let the Anabaptist show that the relation and position of servants remain unchanged, and that a Christian family occupies the very ground, in all its length and breadth, which was occupied by an Israelitish family, and we shall then meet his argument. But as we are well aware he cannot do this, we shall humour him with our reply, as if he were able. Grant that servants do occupy precisely the same relation now as they did in Jewish days, and that a Christian family holds the exact position, in all respects, that the family of an Israelite did, then we say that as masters circumcised their servants in those Jewish times they should in like manner baptize their servants under the Christian dispensation. No Scripture forbids a master to baptize his servants; on the contrary, we find that Lydia was baptized and her household, but while her belief is mentioned, not a word is said about that

of her household (Acts xvi., 14-15), so that they may have received baptism in obedience to her command. We do not affirm they did, but we do affirm it is an open question, and that the doubt is in favour of our view. This is our reply to the argument for the baptism of servants drawn from the usage of circumcision. Let the Anabaptist prove that their family position has remained unaltered, that they as servants are as closely connected with the family now as then, and that each Christian household has the same temporal, ecclesiastical, and spiritual relation to God and the world as the Jewish had, and then our answer is a censure on Christian masters for not baptizing their servants.

2. It is alleged that as the Israelite was instructed to circumcise every male child in his household, and that if married to a heathen, he was to put her away; and since a Christian may have in his family an unbaptized person, and may even retain in marriage an unbeliever who is a heathen, the law of circumcision, therefore, cannot be the law of baptism. Let it be remembered that a Jewish household occupied, in some re-

spects, a unique, civil, social, and religious position. All Israel were to be a peculiar, a holy people unto the Lord, and the design of the Mosaic laws was to bring every family, and every member of every family, into one uniform position towards God and the world. A special grant of land was given Israel as "the congregation of the Lord," and the nation was set apart by prophecy, worship, and faith as separated and distinct from all other people. Israel as Israel stood alone in all the world, and no Christian nation occupies the same ground. God, therefore, laid down special laws for the regulation of each Jewish household as a part of the visible church existing in the unique nation of Israel, and the Jewish master was commanded by these laws to circumcise every male child connected with his family, and was prohibited from contracting marriage with the heathen. In the Corinthian church there were believing husbands and believing wives whose partners remained in heathenism; and the question arose, Should the Mosaic law of marriage, that enjoined the Jewish husband to put away his Gentile wife, apply to these members of the Cor-

inthian church? The Apostle said it should not, as the marriage had been contracted when both parties were heathen, and, therefore, could not have been in violation of any Divine law. In this it differed altogether from the marriage of a Jew with a heathen, for as an Israelite he married a heathen, but these Corinthian Christians had not as Christians married into the heathen world. And the apostle translated the Jewish law of marriage into the language of Christianity, when he said marry "only in the Lord" (1 Cor. viii. 39), which exactly corresponds with the marriage of a Jew with a Jew, both belonging to "the holy nation." This injunction to marry "only in the Lord" is of precisely the same religious and ecclesiastical import as was the Mosaic law that forbade the marriage of an Israelite with a heathen.

In reply, then, to the argument, that as a Jew was commanded to circumcise every male child belonging to his family, and was prohibited from retaining in marriage a Gentile wife; and as a Christian is not expressly instructed to baptize every or any member in his household, and is even permitted to retain an unbelieving wife;

therefore, the law of circumcision does not apply to baptism—we take leave to say that the Christian parent and master is bound to baptize, other things being equal, where an Israelitish parent and master would have circumcised, and that so long as the apostolic injunction, to marry "only in the Lord," remains in force, the Christian is forbidden to contract marriage out of and beyond Christian society, as the Jew was out of and beyond Jewish society. It is intensely stupid to adduce the permission of Paul to Corinthian Christians, who as pagans had been married to pagan partners, to retain their unconverted husbands and unconverted wives, as thereby showing that Christian and Jewish households are widely different. The Corinthian Christian did not, as a Christian, marry a Gentile, but the Israelite, as an Israelite, did, in direct violation of a Divine law. The Anabaptist would be working up something like an argument if he could show that, in the case of a Gentile husband and wife, the Gentile husband, as a husband, became a proselyte to the Jewish religion, while the wife remained in heathenism, and that, ac-

cording to the Mosaic law, he was compelled to put her away. In this case the marriage was contracted in heathenism, and, so far, it tallies with the supposed case or cases in the Corinthian Church; and afterwards the Gentile husband became a convert to Judaism, as did the Gentile Corinthian husband to Christianity. Will the Anabaptist show us where in all the Old Testament the Gentile proselyte was commanded to put away his wife, upon her refusal to follow him into the Jewish Church? He cannot do it. There never was any such law. And we hold that we discover the usage of the Jewish Church in the principle Paul laid down for the guidance of the Corinthian Christians. But a Christian, who, as a Christian, marries a heathen, does so in direct violation of the Divine precept that sanctions marriage "only in the Lord;" just as an Israelite did when he intermarried with the surrounding pagan nations.

3. It is alleged that if circumcision and baptism correspond, so do the Passover and the Lord's Supper, and as it is doubtfully probable that the circumcised child in the Jewish household was

admitted to the paschal feast, it is argued that the baptised child should be admitted to the Lord's Supper. We should feel greatly obliged if our opponents would give us a plain Scriptural proof that every circumcised person was commanded to partake of the passover. We are not aware that they have ever done so, and we are certain they cannot do it. While there is express law requiring that none but the circumcised be permitted to eat the passover, there is no express law commanding every and all circumcised persons to keep the feast. The Mosaic law, indeed, was "Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house. And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb." (Ex. xii., 3-4.) Although a lamb was to be taken "according to the number of the souls" in a household or in households, every circumcised member was not and could not be bound

to eat of it. I presume an Anabaptist would condescend to regard an infant of a fortnight old as having a soul; but surely he would not include it in the number of those for whom the lamb was to be taken, killed, and prepared, and he would not compel it as being circumcised and as having a soul, to eat of that paschal lamb. Here then is one class of circumcised persons who certainly did not keep the passover; and now will the Anabaptist good naturedly inform us, upon plain Scriptural evidence, when, and at what period of life, that circumcised child did, for the first time, eat of the paschal lamb? Like Brutus, we pause for a reply.

In favour of the view that the circumcised child did keep the passover, our opponents may refer us to the Mosaic prohibition, "Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses; for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger or born in the land. Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread." (Ex. xii., 19-20.) Surely the Anabaptist is aware

that, although no bread but unleavened bread was allowed for the seven days to be in any Jewish household, it does not follow that man and child must eat bread during that week. If Israel would eat bread during these seven days, we grant you that it must have been unleavened bread; but the law does not restrict them to that sort of food. The children could find food during this week independent altogether of unleavened bread; and there is no Scripture that declares they must eat of the festival bread.

Suppose, however, the Anabaptist could show that the circumcised children of Israel were really admitted to the passover, what then? Would it follow that baptized children should be admitted to the Lord's Table? It certainly would not. The passover had two meanings, whereas the Lord's Supper has, and can have, only one. The passover was historic and spiritual. It looked back to the night of deliverance, and commemorated the historical or political salvation of Israel in Egypt, and, as a type of Christ, it looked forward to the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, the spiritual passover. As an historical festival, com-

memorating the national deliverance of Israel, the Jewish child might perhaps eat of it; and as his intelligence dawned and his knowledge increased, he would learn its political meaning, and afterwards its rich religious and spiritual import. But the Lord's Supper is simply and solely spiritual, and, therefore, should be eaten by none incapable of perceiving this spiritual meaning.

4. It is said that if baptism should be administered to a child because circumcision was administered to such, then the penalty that was attached to the neglect of the circumcision of a child should, in like manner, be attached to the neglect of the baptism of a child. The objection is easily disposed of. The economy of the Jewish Church was overshadowed with the threatenings of punishment for every breach of law, but the Christian dispensation has been lifted out of the reign of pains and penalties, and has attained a nobler spirit, and breathes a purer and a freer atmosphere. This is clearly shown by the history of the Sabbath under the two dispensations. In the Jewish Church the Sabbath was to be a rest day to the father and master, to the son and the daughter,

to the manservant and the maidservant, to the stranger and the cattle. But attached to the breaking of the Sabbath was the penalty of death. (Ex. xxxi., 15.) It was to be a rest day unto all the inmates of each household under a penalty. It has reached, however, a higher region in the Christian Church. It is still a day of rest to the very same classes that it was in Jewish times, but it has lost its penalty, and changed its position in the week. So with baptism as the initiatory rite of the Christian Church. It represents the rite of membership in our economy, as circumcision did in the former economy; but as in that economy disobedience to this rite of membership was punishable, so was disobedience to the Sabbath rest of the Jews. We argue that as the Sabbath is still for the same persons now as before, but is without its Jewish penalty, so the rite of membership, that was formerly circumcision but is now baptism, belongs to the same persons in a Christian as it did in a Jewish household, although it has lost its Jewish penalty. The penalty attached to circumcision and to the Sabbath was purely Jewish, but the principle of Sabbath rest and of

Church membership is independent of all dispensations, and belongs to the visible church in all ages.

The Anabaptist objects to inferential reasoning drawn from the Old Testament in proof of the right of children to membership under the New Testament economy. Let him remember that Christ proved by inference from that same despised Old Testament, the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead; and if our Lord was satisfied with an inferential argument of man's immortality, then an inferential argument, that is a thousand times more pointed and forceful, might and ought to satisfy the most perverse Anabaptist intellect on the subject of the right of children to membership in the Christian Church. Our argument is that the Jewish and Christian Churches are one and the same "kingdom of God;" that they have each an initiatory rite, teaching the doctrine of regeneration, or the removal of sin; that the persons who were entitled to receive membership by circumcision in the Jewish Church, are entitled, other things being equal, to receive membership

by baptism in the Christian Church, as circumcision and baptism, as initiatory ordinances, are analogous, and have the same spiritual meaning. The Anabaptist affirms that believers and none but believers should be baptized. We grant that Jewish and Gentile believers in Messiah should be baptized, and that unbelievers should be refused the ordinance; but we invite the Anabaptist to study his Bible afresh to find a solitary passage in the New Testament where children, who are certainly not unbelievers, are forbidden baptism. Unbelief shuts out from baptism, but unbelief implies the voluntary rejection of the doctrines of the truth, but children do not reject the truth, and they were received into the Jewish Church by a rite as spiritual as baptism—therefore, we hold that as circumcision and baptism are equally spiritual, and as children were circumcised, they should also be baptized.

CHAPTER VII.

JOHN'S BAPTISM.

BETWEEN the Jewish and Christian Churches, and as a ceremony belonging to neither dispensation, was the baptism of John, Messiah's messenger. The closing prophecy of the Old Testament was, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." (Malachi iv., 5.) Four centuries passed away, and then an angel appeared unto a priest, by name Zacharias, announcing the birth of a son, whom he was to call John, and who was to go "before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elias." (Luke i., 17.) From this circumstance, and from others that attended the birth of the child, many minds were filled with great expectations of his future; and when he began publicly to fulfil his ministry by proclaiming, in the wilderness of Judea, the approach of the kingdom of heaven, "Jerusalem, and all

Judea, and all the region round about Jordan" (Matt. iii., 5) flocked to his ministry. He stood midway between the old and the new dispensation. He belonged exclusively to neither. He rebuked sin and enjoined repentance, and also promised, as not very distant, the advent of One who should be mightier than himself, and who should baptize with "the Holy Ghost and with fire." (Matt. iii., 11.)

Attached to John's preaching, and forming part of his ministerial work, was a baptism with water, called "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." (Mark i., 4.) This baptism implied, on the part of the baptized, a consciousness of, and a desire for, the removal of sin, and it pointed the troubled eye of the awakened conscience to the coming Messiah.

As the Herald of Messiah, John the Baptist had no consolations to bestow apart from those that are bound up in the person and work of the Promised One; but the eye of faith discovered the bow of covenant hope in each drop of the water of baptism. The act of submitting to this baptism was in itself the acknowledgment of sin, the con-

fession of guilt; and we are not to suppose that, as John stood on the bank of Jordan, preaching repentance, he became a priestly confessor, and opened his ear to the sad, and melancholy, and profitless story of the sins and follies of each candidate for baptism, unless we regard him as also giving absolution; for, in his case, oral confession and oral absolution would be correlative ideas. His baptism was an avowal of sin, and was in itself, to the person who submitted to it, a public declaration, by act, of his own consciousness of guilt.

The baptism of John was not of man. It was a divine institution. The record, "He that sent me to baptize with water" (John i., 33), ascribes its origin to God. In what respects, then, if in any, did John's baptism differ from Christian baptism? Both alike implied the existence of guilt, and both alike symbolized its removal by washing; but John's baptism was not administered in the hallowed "name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Acts xix., 2-5), and could not, therefore, have been the same as Christian baptism. His baptism

was temporary, and partook of the transitory character of his work. It began and ended with his mission, and was not destined, in the plan of God, to outlive the Forerunner of Messiah.

Of a character precisely similar to the baptisms of John were those performed by the apostles previous to the death of Christ. Some of these men had been disciples of John, and they appear to have carried with them the example of their late master in the matter of baptizing. But only while the teaching and example of John (John iii., 26; iv., 1-2) were fresh in their memory have we any notice of them baptizing, until after the resurrection of Christ, when they received the commission of our Lord. It would seem that Jesus neither forbade nor instructed them to baptize until after that He rose from the dead, when He said, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. xxviii., 19-20.) As not until they had received

from the Risen Saviour the commission to baptize in the name of the Trinity could the apostles administer, in any instance, Christian Baptism; so then all the baptisms which they did administer prior to the giving of this commission, as well as all the baptisms performed by John, differed essentially from the baptism of the Christian Church.

By far the most important case of baptism ever performed by John was that of Jesus, whom, at first, he refused to baptize on the ground of his own personal or ministerial unworthiness. But Jesus said unto him, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," (Matt. iii., 15) or all ordinances that are Divine institutions; and to this class John's baptism belonged. Jesus did not admit, in the remotest degree, the existence in His nature of a necessity for this baptism, but that there was a propriety in His submitting to it; and that, if He would not submit, He should thereby disturb the harmony of the Divine plan. In the baptizing of Christ, John fulfilled his mission, and strictly closed his office; and this baptism was to be a

part of the Saviour's righteousness as the Fulfiller of the law. It "became" Him to be baptized; for closely connected with the baptism would be the fulfilment to John of the promise, "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost;" (John i., 33) and it "became" Him to be baptized, as, by Divine arrangement, the Spirit should then descend and abide upon Him, filling Him with "all the fulness of the godhead bodily." From the moment of His baptism, Jesus was, by Divine recognition and public dedication, the Son of Man, journeying forward towards the cross and the crown.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SUBJECTS OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

THE various sections of the Christian Church agree in regarding as Scriptural the baptism of an adult, as Jew, Mohammedan, or heathen, when such makes a public profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is precisely the sort of baptism that was practised by the apostles, and which is recorded in Acts. From the position of Christianity in those days, it was absolutely necessary that adults, as such, should be baptized, and that baptism should accompany or follow the avowal of belief in the doctrines of Christianity. None of these baptized adults had been born within the pale of the Christian Church, and none of them had received Christian Baptism in infancy, and, therefore, they did not occupy the position that the children of Christian parents do now, so that the adult baptism that reigns supreme in the Anabaptist

Church wants the distinguishing feature of the adult baptism of apostolic times.

The whole question of infant baptism narrows itself to this point—Do the children born of Christian parents occupy the same ecclesiastical position, with regard to the Christian Church, that Jews and Gentiles did in the days of the apostles? Are they Jews, or Gentiles, or Christians? What constitutes a child a Jew, a Gentile, or a Christian? If the Anabaptist would have the goodness to wake up his faculties and prove that a Christian child is not a Christian child, but a heathen, and, therefore, "unclean," we would confess our defeat, and retire from the field; but, until he do so, he will please graciously to permit us to retain and practice infant baptism, as, for the following reasons, we are strongly inclined to believe, indeed, owing to, I presume, our stupid simplicity, we are firmly convinced that the principle of infant baptism lies in the very constitution of our nature, and is recognized and authorized in Scripture.

1. The children of Christian parents have a right to baptism, as the initiatory rite of the

Christian Church, because of the connection which exists between parent and child. This connection has been assumed in all the laws of God and man. On it the foundations of society are laid. If a parent, industrious and successful, accumulates property, his children are regarded as his heirs, and they share with him his social elevation, and enjoy the fruits of his successful enterprise; but if a parent squanders his patrimony and ruins the family character, his children inherit his poverty and his disgraced name. In the Bible, God has recognized this natural relationship between parent and child, and has elevated it into the region of religion. Yet neither social nor ecclesiastical laws have created this natural and religious affinity; but God, who made the heart of man and moulded his being, constituted this connection between him and his children. This principle of connection is of perpetual recurrence in the Bible. The sin of Adam, in its sad results, came on himself and on his posterity. Ishmael's ridicule cut off himself and his descendants from an interest in the Abrahamic covenant. Esau's profanity excluded

himself and his offspring from the enjoyment of the blessings involved in the birthright. On the other hand, the sons of Noah were saved with their father; and the seed of Israel reaped for more than a thousand years the benefits that resulted to them from their connection with the father of the faithful.

In virtue of the religious relation that, from the very nature of things, exists between parent and child, God recognizes the act of the parent towards his child, as his child, as performed by the child itself, as is evident from the person regarded as guilty when circumcision was neglected on the eighth day. "The uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people, *he hath broken my covĕnant.*" (Gen. xvii., 14.)

This principle of civil and religious connection between parent and child is strongly and distinctly displayed in the address of Moses to assembled Israel. His words are, "Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives,

and thy stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water: That thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day: That he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath; but with him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day." (Deut. xxix., 10-15.) In this passage "the little ones" of Israel, equally with their parents, are said to enter into the covenant and the oath of the Lord, but they could do this only by representation, through connection with their parents, who as their parents, should enter into covenant for them as their children. There is also reference made to the Abrahamic covenant in the words, "That he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn

unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. This covenant, which had been sworn unto Abraham, and to the fathers, was signified to the children by circumcision, administered by their parents, and which brought them into the covenant ecclesiastically, and therefore put them under the fostering care of the church. In virtue of this connection between parent and child, the act of the former is ascribed to the latter as if he himself were the agent, and the circumcised child is as truly an heir of the covenant in its civil and ecclesiastical sense as his parent.

This same principle of filial, religious relationship is acknowledged and recognized in the New Testament. It is taught as plainly as words can teach by Paul when he says, "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: *else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.*" (1 Cor. vii., 14.) Our argument is not in any degree affected by the meaning that may be attached to the terms "unclean" and "holy," but rests on the simple and undeniable fact that connection with unbelieving parents makes

children "unclean," whatever that may mean, whereas connection with believing parents makes children "holy." Whence, then, arises this marked difference? It cannot lie in the children themselves, but must be the result of the belief or unbelief of the parents. Children, as children, are neither "unclean" nor "holy," viewed from the Apostle's standpoint of thought; but they derive these respective characteristics from connection with parents who, in the eye of the Church, occupy a certain position, and enjoy, or are excluded from enjoying, religious privileges. Therefore, since parentage confers weal or woe on children socially, and since the principle is recognized in an ecclesiastical sense in the Church of the Old and New Testaments, we conclude that the children of Christian parents are entitled to the enjoyment of such privileges as belong to this relation and principle; and since this connection was acknowledged in the Abrahamic covenant, and in the Jewish Church, and was the foundation of a Jewish child's right to circumcision, we claim the existence of the principle, and, therefore, of the right still, and demand that the

children of Christian parents be baptized and received into the membership of the Church, unless God has plainly and expressly shut them out by precept or required qualification.

2. As the children of Jewish parents were admitted into the ancient Church by circumcision, the children of Christian parents should be received into the New Testament Church by baptism. The Jewish and Christian Churches are essentially the same. Circumcision and baptism are their respective, initiatory rites, and exhibit the same spiritual doctrine. They both equally imply the defiled nature of man, and symbolize regeneration—the one by cutting off, the other by washing away. Having, therefore, the same spiritual meaning, baptism may be as truly the privilege of the Christian child as circumcision was of the Jewish; and as the Jewish child was circumcised and received into "the congregation of the Lord," the Christian child should be baptized and admitted into the Christian Church. Our argument is simply this:—Circumcision and baptism signify the same doctrine of moral purification, but God commanded the Jewish male child to receive cir-

cumcision, therefore, as baptism has just the same spiritual import that circumcision had, there is nothing in the nature of baptism itself to prevent a Christian child from receiving it.

3. From incidental allusions made to children in the Gospels, we conclude that Christ recognized them as entitled to membership in the Church. In a way singularly beautiful and touching the Saviour welcomed them into His presence, and severely censured the Anabaptist spirit that would shut them out of His Church and deprive them of His blessing. When the disciples rebuked parents for bringing their little children to Jesus, He said, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," or of God. (Matt. xix., 14.) In this rebuke there are three things worthy of notice—first, the persons brought to Jesus; secondly, the principle He laid down; and thirdly, the reason He assigned for that principle.

(a.) The persons brought to Christ for His blessing were children, or, as Luke calls them, infants. Actuated by the finest and tenderest feelings of our nature, parents brought their infant

children to the Saviour. These parents must, therefore, have been believers in Him, and have stood towards Him in a certain religious relation. Here, then, are *believing* parents bringing their little ones to Him, who, as the Good Shepherd, had promised "to gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom."

(b.) The principle laid down is, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me," or literally, "Suffer *the* little children." All children are not included in this invitation, but only such as belong to the class before Him—that is, such as have believing parents. The invitation is founded on the position which the parents occupy towards the Church, and the principle enunciated by our Lord, and which is to last as long as the visible "kingdom of God," is that the children of believing parents are to be brought to Him, and to enjoy all the privileges that belong to such an act.

(c.) The reason He assigned for permitting the children to be brought to Him was, "For of such is the kingdom of heaven" or "of God." What is here meant by "the kingdom of heaven?"

Sometimes it signifies the visible Church, and sometimes the invisible. The Anabaptist assumes that it means, in the passage before us, the invisible church or kingdom of glory; and his line of reasoning is, that as this is *sometimes* its signification, this *must* be its import here. Most marvellous and most potent logic! Because "the kingdom of heaven," in some instances, denotes the heavenly Church, it must, therefore, have this meaning, when Christ said of little children, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." So reasons the Anabaptist. But he reasons falsely, for "the kingdom of heaven" in this passage is the visible Church then existing among the Jews. In the parable of the householder, our Lord teaches us that "the vineyard," which had been given to Israel, is the kingdom of heaven or of God, and that it is to be taken from the Jews, on account of their unfaithfulness, and given to the Gentiles. "Therefore, I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." (Matt. xxi., 43.) So then "the kingdom of heaven," as the visible Church,

existed among the Jews in the days of our Lord, and, by Divine arrangement, children were received into its membership through circumcision. This fact our Saviour recalled to the minds of the apostles, when He said, "For of such is the kingdom of heaven," or "of such is my church composed;" and upon this fact of membership, He, the Saviour upon whom the Church is built, and to whom, therefore, these children belonged, stooped down, and lifted the little ones in His arms, and blessed them. Our argument is very simple and direct. It is this. Christ elsewhere taught that "the kingdom of heaven" is the visible Church. We know that Jewish children belonged to the Jewish Church by circumcision, and were literally within its pale. Jewish children were, therefore, in the visible Church or "the kingdom of heaven." Our Lord addressed His disciples, saying, "Suffer these little children and such as these to come unto me; forbid them not; for of these children and such as these the kingdom of heaven or my visible church is composed." Then, what followed? He took these very children in his arms and

blessed them. Why? Because they were members of His church on earth, having received circumcision at the hands of their believing parents. Very plainly He here recognizes the church membership of children.

But the Anabaptist hurriedly exclaims, "You are grievously mistaken in the meaning of the expression 'such.' 'Of *such* is the kingdom of heaven.' For I have consulted my Anabaptist Dictionary, which is, by the way, an awfully learned and pretentious work, and was specially manufactured to meet such perplexities as the one before us; and oh, it gives such a beautiful, and lovely, and pathetic, and scholarly, and philosophical, and heavenly explanation of this very passage. It says that 'such,' in this instance, does not refer to the children at all, but to believers who have got a child-like spirit, and are humble and teachable. And, of course, it must mean this, otherwise our system would fall, for we dare not refuse to receive children as members of the church if we admit that Christ recognized them as belonging to 'the kingdom of heaven.'"

Pause and reflect, my Anabaptist friend. Were

not the children of Jewish parents introduced into the Church by circumcision? Was not that Jewish Church, or "the vineyard," by our Lord's own showing, declared to be "the kingdom of God?" If that "kingdom of God" was the Jewish Church, were not circumcised Jewish children in that "kingdom of God?" Did not our Saviour, in His rebuke of the disciples, remind them of a well-known fact, when He said, "Of such is the kingdom of God or of heaven," since that "kingdom of God" He had Himself declared to be the Jewish Church? As belonging, then, to that kingdom, were not these children blessed by Him? These are simple truths: let the Anabaptist meet them if he can.

Besides, how could the teachable disposition of a man as a believer confer the right on a child to claim as a child the blessing of Christ? It is not in this case the faith of a father that secures a benediction from the Lord's lips, if we adopt the Anabaptist view, but of man as man. Our opponents say, "Oh, a believer has a docile disposition by grace, and a child has a docile disposition by nature, and God blesses the child, for the believer's

sake, because he has by nature, what the believer gets by grace." This is a roundabout way surely for a child to get at the heart of God. We rather think that simple-minded Christians would be slightly surprised if they heard a mother translate this Anabaptist explanation into a petition, and pray the Heavenly Father that because her child has what every child has, what, in fact, belongs to childhood, a teachable disposition, and that as in the invisible kingdom or Church all have a teachable disposition, He would therefore bless her little one. Would it not be more natural and more Scriptural to implore God to bless the child because that now in childhood it is so susceptible of good influences, and its character is so easily moulded? If the teachable disposition of the child does not itself gain the blessing of Jesus, upon what principle does the like disposition of a believer gain this blessing for the child—a child, the only link between him and it being that the one has by nature, and the other by grace, a teachable disposition? The truth is that while the child does not need to go up to the intellect of a man, that it may enter the invisible church, the man must come down to the simpli-

city of a child. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdon of heaven." (Matt. xviii. 3.)

The phrase "Of such is the kingdom of heaven" is elliptical. In the first clause of the sentence, "little children" is introduced: "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me;" and in the second clause "little children" is implied, "for of such little children is the kingdom of heaven." Children are to be suffered to come to Christ for his blessing, because His church is in part composed of such. When the apostles were wrangling among themselves as to priority, Jesus took a child and set him in the midst of them, and said, "Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me." The phrase "such" here qualifies and is connected with "little child," and does not refer to man as having a teachable disposition, but to this very child and to children such as this. Our argument, therefore, is that as Christ rebuked the disciples, saying, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me," assigning as the reason, "For of such is the kingdom of heaven," He referred to a fact well known to the Jews—namely,

the membership of their children in their church, and on this membership He rested the principle that children should not be prevented from being brought to Him for his blessing. Our Lord, therefore, has laid it down as the standing law of "the kingdom of God" among men, that the little children, the infants of believing parents, are entitled to the membership of His church.

4. From an allusion which Paul makes in one of his epistles to the marked distinction that exists between the children of believing and of unbelieving parents, we are bound to believe that the children of professing Christian parents have a right to baptism.

The Apostle, writing to the Corinthian Church, says, "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy." (1 Cor. vii., 14.) By the Mosaic law a Jew was prohibited from contracting marriage with a heathen, and the Corinthian Church, believing in the identity of the Jewish and Christian Churches, and apprehensive lest the Mosaic law of marriage might apply to their times, were

greatly perplexed; for, when the Gospel was first preached in Corinth, the citizens were sunk in heathenism, but many converts were made to the new faith, and among these were husbands and wives whose partners still remained in idolatry. The grave question occurred to the Corinthian Church—What should these believing husbands and believing wives do? The Church applied to the Apostle Paul for advice. His reply was, "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband, so far as the birth of the children is concerned; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy." If both parents were unbelievers, their children would be "unclean," or, according to the meaning of the Jewish term, unfit to be set apart to the service of God; but, in the case of one of the parents being a believer, the children are "holy," or fit to be dedicated to God. In this distinction between children as "unclean" and as "holy" we discover the recognition of the principle that the Jewish Church sanctioned the circumcision of the children of Jewish parents, and which also authorizes the

baptism of the children of parents connected with the Christian Church.

The Anabaptist, however, argues that if the children of the believing parent receive a holiness that qualifies them for baptism, then the unbelieving husband or the unbelieving wife receives from the believing wife or the believing husband a holiness that also qualifies for baptism, as, in the expression "the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife," the word "sanctified" has the same import as "holy." But our friend should recollect that the unbelieving husband or unbelieving wife is a wilful and persistent unbeliever, rejecting positively and perversely the doctrines of the Gospel, which remark does not, in the remotest degree, apply to the infant children, so that there is an essential difference between the state of unbelief in which the parent is and the state of undevelopedness in which the child is. The unbelief of the one parent is counteracted and overwhelmed by the belief of the other parent, so far as their children are concerned; and in this sense only is the unbelieving parent "sanctified." It is not as a man

that the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife, but as the father of her child, who is, therefore, to be regarded as "holy" unto the Lord. But, according to the Jewish Church, from which this language is borrowed, a person "holy" may be consecrated to the service of God; therefore, the child of a believing parent, in virtue of its connection with that parent, can be dedicated to God, which is done in baptism.

5. The terms of the apostolic commission do not exclude children from baptism. "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. xxviii., 19-20.)

Here is a command, "Go ye, therefore, and teach or disciple all nations." But how are the nations to be discipled? By baptizing and teaching. The commission says, "Go ye, therefore, and disciple all nations, baptizing *them.*" Now, who are included in "them?" Let us simplify

this commission, and we shall the more easily understand its meaning.

Speaking to the Jews about their Church, Christ said, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." These words teach us that He, at least, regarded "the kingdom of God" as one under all dispensations, and that he, therefore, viewed the Jewish and Christian Churches as equally and alike that "kingdom of God." Suppose then He had given this commission to his apostles, substituting circumcision for baptism, and had said to them, "Go ye, therefore, and proselytise all nations, circumcising *them*," whom should the disciples have regarded as included in "them"? Would the usage of the "kingdom of God" have shut out children from receiving circumcision? We know it would not. Why, then, should baptism be denied them? As an ecclesiastical ordinance it is exactly analogous to circumcision, and from the nature of the case, viewed in all its aspects, we are forced to believe that the apostles regarded the commission as including children as well as adults.

To whom was the commission given? To men born in the Jewish Church, or, more correctly, received into that Church as children on the eighth day—to men accustomed to see the children of Gentile proselytes admitted into the Church along with their parents—and with this Jewish education they were sent forth "to disciple all nations, baptizing them." What, then, could be their simple interpretation of this commission? Shall they baptize the children of converts to Christianity? Such were invariably circumcised in the Jewish Church, and the two Churches of Judaism and Christianity are both "the kingdom of God." Christ never forbade them to receive children. On the contrary, He said, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." And in the last conversation which the Risen Saviour held with the apostles, as recorded by John, He committed to the care of Peter, as loving Him, the lambs of His fold, or the children of His Church, in the tender and beautiful words, "Feed my lambs" (John xxi, 15-17); and then afterwards, as if they were only of secondary im-

portance, He adds, "Feed my sheep. Feed my sheep." Do these words imply that He had forgotten children, and had shut them out of His church? Besides, he had said on a former occasion, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven;" and again, "Whosoever receiveth one such little child in my name, receiveth me." Does such language imply the abrogation of the privileges enjoyed by children under the Jewish Church? And the men to whom these words were spoken, and to whom the commission was given, were trained in an anti-Anabaptist school, and had been previously reprimanded for wishing to exclude children from the Saviour's presence, as they, doubtless, considered them beneath His notice and His blessing, although fit and entitled to be received as members into the Jewish Church.

It is argued, however, that as baptism is not a Jewish, but a Christian, ordinance, the regulations of the Jewish Church ought not to be brought forward to explain the apostolic commission. Does Paul say so? Nay; but he pointedly

applies Jewish phraseology to children in the Christian era, and actually gives them, in the view of the Christian Church, a Jewish character and position. He says, "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." The expressions "unclean" and "holy" he borrows from the Jewish Church, and he says, by implication, that these terms are truly applicable to children as expressing their relation towards the Christian Church. We are aware that the Anabaptist will draw himself up to his full height, and, with a magisterial air, assert that these phrases mean, respectively, "illegitimate" and "legitimate." Well, suppose we do concede the straw to the drowning man, shall it save him from the waves of the Pædobaptist truth? We fear not. What is the nature of this legitimacy or illegitimacy? Is it natural or ecclesiastical? The Corinthian Church, as an ecclesiastical society, writes to Paul, an ecclesiastical lawyer by Divine ordination, regarding the ecclesiastical position of children, one of whose parents is a

heathen, while the other is a Christian. The question is purely ecclesiastical. Paul, in the character and with the authority of an apostle, replies by saying that, if both the parents are unbelievers, the children are "unclean;" but, on the other hand, although one only of the parents, it matters not which one, is a believer, then the children are "holy;" or, as the Anabaptist prefers to phrase it, these children are respectively "illegitimate" and "legitimate." But this is ecclesiastical legitimacy and illegitimacy. Here we have the apostle distinguishing between children ecclesiastically illegitimate or ceremonially unclean, and children ecclesiastically legitimate or ceremonially holy, and, therefore, as he has employed a Jewish term to express the religious character of children, he must have regarded them as still possessing a certain Jewish position, even towards the church of the Christian era. But, according to the Jewish economy, the "unclean" could not be dedicated to God, and the "holy" could; so, then, the "unclean" child or the child born of heathen parents, while its parents remain in heathenism, cannot be dedicated to Christ in

baptism; but the "holy" child or the child born of believing parents can. And, further, according to the laws of the Jewish Church, children of Jewish parents were received into it by circumcision, for they were "holy" in the ecclesiastical sense; therefore, the children of Christian parents should in like manner be received into the Christian Church, for they, too, are "holy."

"Go ye, therefore, and disciple all *nations*," is the Redeemer's command. But do "nations" include infants as well as adults? Or, should He have said, if He had wished children baptized, "Go ye, therefore, and disciple all nations and *infants?*" The Anabaptist argument implies that He should. The Pædobaptist, however, with great simplicity, regards the term "nations" as not only probably including, but in very truth including men, women, and children of every age. This may betray pre-eminent stupidity on his part, and may, unfortunately, subject him to the learned sneer of the Anabaptist, but as this is his misfortune and not his sin, he will bear it patiently, and so long as this poor world marries and gives in

marriage, he will hold to the idea that "a nation" includes children.

The Anabaptist believes he can shut children out of the apostolic commission by the word "disciple." "Go ye, therefore, and *disciple* all nations." Discipleship, he argues, involves intellectual capability not possessed by infants. Now, what is the simple, natural, every day import of disciple? Is it not a learner or scholar under the care and tuition of a person who is a teacher? A child, in an infant school, learning the alphabet, is as truly a disciple, that is, a learner, as the student at college. Discipleship does not consist in the amount of knowledge possessed, or in the development of the mind, but in the relation existing between one as a learner and another as a teacher. This point is illustrated by a passage in the Old Testament, where, concerning the Kohathites, it is said, "In the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, were eight thousand and six hundred, keeping the charge of the sanctuary." (Numbers iii., 28.) Now, how could children "a month old" keep the sanctuary? Only in one way could it be said they kept the

sanctuary at this rather juvenile age; from the time they were a month old they were dedicated by public recognition and trained to this sacred work. Now, by baptism a child is enrolled in the church or school of Christ, and from that moment he is to be regarded as a learner of the Gospel, and occupies the position of a disciple towards Christ and His Church.

But it is said that baptism should not be administered to a person incapable of exercising intelligent belief, and that as children have not this capability there is no Divine warrant for their baptism. To sustain this assertion, which he considers as quite decisive, the Anabaptist links together two separate and distinct utterances of our Master. To the command, "Go ye, therefore, and disciple all nations, baptizing them," he adds these words, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark xvi., 15, 16.) He holds that the "disciple" of Matthew is the "believer" of Mark, and that the disciple, as a believer, is the only Scriptural subject

of baptism. But the commissions are not one and the same. That recorded by Matthew was delivered by Christ on a mountain in Galilee as He was on the wing to glory, while the one recorded by Mark was spoken to the disciples as they sat at meat, and was prefaced with a strong censure on account of their unbelief of the fact that He was indeed risen from the dead. He tells them they should cultivate faith in Him, for they must preach the gospel in faith, and must themselves be saved by faith, as well as all their hearers who would gain eternal life. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel unto every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." Do these words tell us who are to be baptized? They do not. They do not say that the believer only is to be baptized, but that salvation is sure to the baptized believer. Baptism before belief or after belief has no bearing whatever on salvation, save as a symbol of it. Water baptism is not essential to redemption—regeneration does not hinge upon it. We have no evidence that the twelve apostles were baptized. The hysterical scream of

an Anabaptist female, as she disappears beneath the waters of the baptistery, is no stray note wafted earthward from the harps of angels rejoicing over a sinner saved. It is faith which saves, and water baptism is nothing more than a carnal ordinance—a ceremonial institution—by which a person is received into the Church, and publicly recognized as within its communion.

In this passage from Mark there are two classes of persons mentioned: believers who shall be saved, and unbelievers who shall be damned. Baptism does not save believers, nor does the want of baptism damn unbelievers. But observe, children are neither believers nor unbelievers. They belong to neither class. They have not received the truth, nor have they rejected it. We may call them disbelievers, that is, ones lying between believers and unbelievers; belief implies the voluntary reception of the truth, and unbelief denotes its voluntary rejection; but children have neither accepted nor rejected it, therefore, they cannot be called either believers or unbelievers. They are disbelievers, and the New Testament nowhere says that because children are incapable

of belief they must be excluded from baptism. While belief is demanded of adults before they be baptized, it is not of children, who, as disbelievers, were circumcised and admitted into the Jewish Church, and their disbelief should no more deprive them of Christian privileges than it did of Jewish. Our argument is, that the child, being neither a believer nor an unbeliever, but a disbeliever, or in that stage of existence that precedes belief or unbelief, should not be subjected to the same mental laws and tried by the same standard of intelligence as the adult, and that in no passage of the New Testament is it said that the child of Christian parents should be refused baptism on the ground of its being incapable of believing.

It is alleged that all the New Testament instances of baptism show that believer-baptism is the only Christian baptism. Perhaps it is the only recorded class of baptisms; but surely in a period of thirty-three years, over which the Acts spreads, the apostles baptized on more than eight occasions, yet there are only eight mentioned. But apart from this; the believer-baptism, as held by the Anabaptist, is a foundation of sand, on

which many a Babel argument is built. Will the tower resist the storm? Let us see.

Belief has two essentially distinct meanings. First, it denotes the simple assent of the mind to the truth of an historical incident, as we believe there was such a man as the Duke of Wellington, and such a battle as Waterloo. This belief is nothing more than the assent of the understanding, and is within the range of man's unaided intellect. Secondly, belief reaches a higher region and expresses the reception of the truth in a saving manner, as "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." (1 John v. 1.) Mental belief is man's own act, and precedes spiritual belief, which is in every instance the gift of God. A man can receive intellectually or have a mental belief in the historical facts of Christ's earthly career without necessarily possessing saving or regenerating faith in Him who thus lived and died as the world's Redeemer. And it was this mental assent of the understanding to the doctrines of the gospel that the apostles demanded as the qualification for baptism. This is easily proved. On all hands it is admitted that without the Holy

Ghost no man can be a believer in the spiritual sense of the term. There can be no evangelical believer-baptism until the Holy Ghost has come into the heart. This will be granted by all, I presume. Well, on the day of Pentecost, Peter preached this doctrine, "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. His hearers exclaimed, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" The reply was, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts ii., 36-38.) This could not have been believer-baptism in the Anabaptist sense, as the coming of the Spirit is promised after, and as something subsequent to repentance and baptism; and we know that none can savingly receive the truth and become an evangelical believer until the Spirit enters the heart. Belief, without the Spirit's agency, is neither more nor less than the simple act of the understanding.

Again, driven by persecution from Jerusalem, Philip went down to Samaria, and preached the Gospel to the Samaritans. "But when they be-

lieved Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also, and was baptized." (Acts viii., 12, 13.) The great truth that Philip preached to the Samaritans is contained in "the name of Jesus Christ"—that is, the Messiahship of the Crucified One; and, believing this doctrine, they were at once baptized. But this belief was mental, not spiritual, faith; for when, days after, Peter and John came down from Jerusalem to Samaria, they found that not one of the baptized Samaritans had as yet received the Holy Ghost. Their believer-baptism was nothing more than an intellectual assent, as unregenerated men, to the doctrine of Christ's Messiahship. In no sense had the Samaritans received the Holy Ghost when Peter and John came to them, but afterwards these apostles prayed for them, and the Divine Spirit was given.

Still further, Simon Magus believed and was baptized, and afterwards Peter declared him to be "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." The Anabaptist will say that this was

a case of imposition. But where is his authority for such a statement? Peter regarded the baptism as real baptism. Philip was not rebuked for administering the ordinance to an unworthy candidate, and cautioned to be more careful in future, nor was Simon Magus censured for having solicited and received baptism while he was yet dead in his sins. We respectfully invite the attention of the Anabaptist to the believer-baptism of the Samaritans, and he shall there find that the early disciples performed the rite of initiation into the Church in an exceedingly loose and hasty manner as contrasted with the usage of modern believer-baptizers.

The third case of apostolic baptism is that of the Ethiopian eunuch.

Philip saw the foreigner as he sat in his chariot returning from Jerusalem, and the Spirit said to him, "Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit

with him. The place of the Scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearers, so opened he not his mouth. In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water: what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (Acts viii., 29-37.)

The theme of the apostle was the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies in the life and death of our Lord, or, in a word, the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth. Approaching water the stranger said, "See, here is water: what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip, doubtful

that he had a clear view of the crucified One as the Messiah, and wishing to impress upon his mind the necessity of having a thorough conviction of the truth of this great doctrine of apostolic preaching, replied, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." The full and proper meaning of the question is to be found in the answer which Philip received as satisfactory. The eunuch's reply contained the avowal of his mental assent to the doctrine of the Lord's Messiahship. "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Mark this answer. The Ethiopian candidate for apostolic baptism does not speak the Anabaptist dialect. He does not say that Divine life has begun in his soul, that he hopes his sins are blotted out, that he believes he is born again, and desires to receive baptism as the public profession of the saving change wrought in his heart. He says simply, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Connecting these words with the prophecy of Isaiah, which Philip and he had been reading, and in which Messiah is spoken of as living a life of sorrow and dying a death of shame, we learn that the eunuch de-

clared his mental conviction that Jesus Christ the Crucified was in very truth the Son of God, and the fulfilment of former prophecies. No higher meaning can, we think, be fairly found in the expression. One thing is certain, this lower meaning is, beyond all doubt, in the eunuch's words, but that a higher and a spiritual is also in them is a matter of mere speculation. We know there was an intellectual belief involved in the confession, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God;" but let the Anabaptist prove that there was also saving, spiritual faith.

Besides, Philip does not say to the eunuch that the confession which he has now made entitles him to heaven and glory, but that it qualifies him to receive baptism from man, which is a carnal ordinance, and has not the remotest connection, in ordinary cases, with regeneration. It is a type of a spiritual blessing, but a type is a shadow, an unsubstantial good, a ceremonial shadowing forth a celestial gift and a spiritual blessing.

There is a marked difference between the believer-baptism of the eunuch and the believer-baptism of our Anabaptist friends. We have Philip ad-

dressing a man who is so ignorant that he cannot discover Christ in a plain prophecy of Isaiah, and yet in a little while, it may have been an hour, it may have been only half an hour, at any rate it was before they separated, he actually baptized him. Where is the Anabaptist who, getting hold of a person so grossly ignorant that he is unable to discover Jesus in Isaiah's plainest prophecy, will yet baptize him before they part? Does he not look for and demand something beyond what the apostles regarded as a sufficient qualification for Christian baptism?

The fourth case of baptism in Acts is that of Paul. This was the baptism of an extraordinary man preceded by and performed under extraordinary circumstances. The Saviour had visibly revealed His glory, and overshadowed with darkness the vision of the persecutor. For three days Saul neither eat nor drank, but the voice of terrible majesty kept ringing in his ears, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Then came Ananias to him saying, "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest

receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and was baptized." (Acts ix., 1-18.) Ananias did not make any inquiry as to Saul's belief before he baptized him; he had no need; God had revealed to him that he was to be "a chosen vessel," and his duty was, therefore, to baptize the future Apostle without either question or delay. He was aware that, in this instance, the baptism with water and with the Spirit would be conjoined, and that saving faith was struggling into life in the wounded heart of the penitent persecutor; and hence he said, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts xxii., 16.)

The fifth occurrence of baptism in Acts is that of Cornelius and his friends, upon whom, while Peter preached, the Holy Ghost descended, giving them power to speak with tongues. The apostle, clinging fondly and firmly to his Jewish predilections, was strongly disinclined to admit Gentiles to Christian privileges, till the King of the Church taught him in a vision that He has no

respect of person; and afterwards, by conferring on the centurion and his companions the supernatural gift of tongues, He further declared that they, as Gentiles, shared in the blessings of Pentecost, and were, therefore, entitled to the ecclesiastical privileges enjoyed by converts from Judaism. This baptism was of the highest importance to the growth and success of Christianity as the faith revealed of heaven for universal man, both as to the lesson it taught the disciples, and in the influence it exerted on the condition and prospects of the Christian Church. The supernatural effusion of the Spirit lifted it into the rank of a Pentecostal baptism, and in the Divine plan it was intended to remove, and it did effectually remove, the barrier that had existed for centuries between the Jew and the Gentile, and which was then hoary with age.

The next baptism is that of Lydia, "whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." (Acts xvi. 14-15.) It is said of her that even before she heard the apostles preach the good news of a Risen Saviour she "worshipped God," an expression

large and spiritual enough to include not only simple attendance on Sabbath ordinances, but also the presence and activity of deep, religious, and sanctified feelings, the result of Divine life in the awakened soul. No one can tell the exact meaning of these words as applied by the Spirit to Lydia's religious life. She may have been on the narrow way that leads to the gates of the Celestial City long before she heard Paul preach the doctrine of a Crucified Redeemer in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The subject is wrapped in darkness. The truth is known only to God. This much, however, we do know, that until Paul preached in her hearing she had not accepted the glorious and thrilling truth that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah. But she heard the apostle preach, and the sacred historian, speaking as we are inclined to think he does from a human standpoint of view, informs us of the result as it appeared to man, and says, "Whose heart the Lord opened, *that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.*" She now accepted the doctrine of Christ's Messiahship and became a convert to Christianity; but we hesitate to go

further, and affirm there is a deeper meaning in these words employed by Luke, and that they imply, above and beyond the simple thought of her intellectual conversion to the faith of the cross, the fact of her change of heart and spiritual renovation.

The seventh recorded case of baptism is that of the Philippian jailer, who, having been alarmed by the earthquake that shook the prison, came trembling to the disciples, exclaiming, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" The answer was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." (Acts xvi. 30, 31.) On the belief of this man is placed the salvation of himself and his house, for Paul does not say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and if thy household also believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, they, too, shall be saved," but he teaches that, in some sense or other, the faith he enjoins on the father shall save both himself and his family. The language of the Apostle does not seem to us to warrant the conclusion that the faith demanded of the jailer was faith in its highest form and of the most spiritual

import, but that it was to be a faith that would, in some way or other, bring salvation both to himself and to his household. The meaning of the words appears, then, to be, that the jailer should yield mental assent, as a rational and intelligent being, to the great doctrine of Christ's Messiahship, and should make a profession of his credence of this new and glorious truth by submitting to the rite of baptism, and thus bring himself and his family, also baptized upon the ground of his faith as father and master, into the Christian Church, that they might learn the way of life and receive the gift of God. This command was, therefore, in exact accordance with the law of membership which regulated "the kingdom of God" under the Patriarchal and Jewish dispensations, as the Gentile proselyte brought his entire household along with himself into the Church of those times.

Let it not be objected that Paul preached Christ to the jailer and to his family before he baptized them, for this fact does not in the slightest degree affect our argument, which rests upon the simple declaration of the Apostle, "Be-

lieve on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." We hold that, in some sense or other, the father's faith is able to save not only himself but also the inmates of his house. Suppose him, then, to become a Christian, and to bring his household with him into the Christian Church, would he not thereby secure for himself and for his family the instruction that is recognized as necessary to man's salvation? This line of thought is precisely the same as that which was in the mind of the Apostle, when he said, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How, then, shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom. x., 13, 14.)

The argument that we draw from these passages of Scripture is that the qualification for apostolic believer-baptism was not the self-consciousness of regeneration, not the belief that Christ had actually washed away the sins of the candidate for baptism, nor even the hope of guilt forgiven, but that it was the rational, intellectual assent of the

mind to the doctrine that Jesus Christ is the Fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies, and Saviour of mankind. We are confirmed in this opinion by the important fact that in no one recorded instance did the apostles ever ask a candidate for baptism if he had received the Holy Ghost; nay, Peter, on the day of Pentecost, promised the Spirit only after baptism, and Philip also baptized the Samaritans, although not one had as yet received the Holy Ghost; and it is further said that Simon Magus believed and was baptized, while he was still in "the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." The belief of the Samaritans, and especially of Simon Magus, could not have been regenerating belief, as it is clearly impossible savingly to receive the truth without the previous action of God's Spirit on the heart, and yet these men were baptized, and the belief they had, such as it was, qualified them for baptism, and their baptism was the model of apostolic believer-baptism.

The believer-baptism of the New Testament was intended only as a proselytizing ordinance, and was confined to Jews and Gentiles as con-

verts to the Christian religion; and we have, therefore, no right to infer that believer-baptism should be the baptism of the Church in the case of children born of Christian parents. The declaration "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," was addressed to men sent to proselytize the world to the Christian faith, and was, therefore, so far as belief and baptism are connected, intended to apply to the reception of proselytes into the Church.

We are strongly inclined to regard the principle that underlies the believer-baptism of the Anabaptist Church as involving many and grave difficulties. We wish to speak the truth in love to all men, but the truth we are bound to speak, although it may be as it often is, grievously offensive to the prejudiced mind. Viewing then the believer-baptism of the Anabaptist Church in the light of the Anabaptist literature, we think it is false to the truths of science and unsupported by Scripture evidence. The principle it lays hold of, and to which it clings, is that a person, educated from childhood in the faith of the Gospel, surrounded from the cradle with Christian influences,

breathing a Christian atmosphere, moulded in thought, feeling, and affection by the religion of the Cross, should be conscious of his spiritual transformation whenever he becomes the subject of the regenerating change. We cannot subscribe to this dogma in all its length and breadth; we cannot accept it as the principle of Christianity in our day, the test and standard of the believer's experience.

We are aware that many who call themselves students of the Bible, and who regard themselves as deeply versed in sacred lore, and in the experiences of a holy life, affirm that a Christian, even at the present time, should have as vivid a consciousness of the fact and of the date of his conversion, as Jews and Gentiles had, who, as men, for the first time, heard the Gospel preached by the apostles. But the cases are not by any means parallel. To be a Jew or a Gentile implied that the person was a stranger to the doctrine that Jesus of Nazareth is the world's Redeemer, and that the truths of the New Testament were to him *new* in the fullest and deepest sense, and, when he received the theology of the Cross, he was

conscious of its reception as a mental fact, and this reception marked the era of his conversion according to Scripture usage. A Jew or a Gentile must have had an internal perception of this change in his theological views; but this change in religious thought cannot be experienced by one who has been educated in the doctrines of Christianity from his earliest years, and has been a Christian by profession all his life. He is not to expect conversion to come upon him, as it came upon the Apostle Paul, with the suddenness of a thunder peal. The position of Paul was not that of a Christian, nurtured in the faith of the Gospel from childhood. His conversion began in the region of his mental consciousness; in the change of his religious creed; in the throwing down of the battlements of Jewish bigotry; in the Divine announcement that He whom he persecuted is none other than Jesus of Nazareth, the despised Galilean.

Familiar with Christian truth from infancy—living on it, growing in it—we are not to conclude that our spiritual change must be attended with any very vivid feeling or violent excitement of

mind. In the experience of Elijah, God was not in the strong wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but He was with the "still small voice." But we would not be supposed to deny the possibility of sudden spiritual transformations, even in our day, when God breathes spiritual life into the sinner, as He breathed the living soul into Adam. We are inclined to think, however, that it is only or generally in the case of very wicked men that God thus acts, rending their hard heart as with an earthquake—hurling them in a moment into depths of agony, and flashing the terrible lightnings of judgment upon their alarmed conscience. But these are exceptional instances, and do not form the rule of Christian experience. Very rarely is day ushered in with the roll of thunder and the gloom of tempest. How still and serenely peaceful is the sunrise! How silently the shadows steal away, and the mists disappear, and the beautiful light grows brighter! There is no airy tumult nor sound of celestial trump as daylight dawns, and the sun comes forth out of the rosy chambers of the brightening and beautiful East. Who can tell the precise point of time

where night ends and day begins? As still, as noiselessly, as secretly does God's Spirit move and work in the human heart, drawing it gently by invisible chords of love towards the bosom of the Great Father, and giving it a higher relish and a holier purpose. It forms no part of the believer's salvation that he directly and consciously perceives the presence of the indwelling Spirit in his heart, as an absolutely supernatural testimony; but he is to seek the Spirit's presence in the evidences furnished by the tenor of his life, by the feelings of his heart, and by his mental states. If he has the fruits of the Spirit, the roots that bear the fruits are not far distant.

The believer-baptism of the Anabaptist Church involves the principle that one trained in the school of Christ from childhood may and should know of his conversion as soon as the work of regeneration begins within his heart. We are unwilling to charge the Anabaptist Church with holding this doctrine in all its length and breadth; but we are free to affirm that, if its believer-baptism be logically analyzed, this principle will be found to underlie it; and there is a believer-bap-

tism sect, made up of the stray waifs, the fag-ends of other churches, which speaks out the dogma very bluntly, and asserts, in round terms, that, if a man is born again, he must know that he is born again.

The illustration is taken from the natural birth. There is the mother and the child. The mother is conscious of the child's birth, but the child is not, and cannot be till the dawn of intelligence and the development of self-consciousness. The Anabaptist theology would affirm that the child is not born until it is conscious of the fact as a fact, and that as it lies in the cradle it is still really unborn, for it does not know that it is born. Now, in the spiritual birth there is the Spirit of God, corresponding to the mother in the natural birth, and there is the heart of man in which the germinal life is implanted. God's Spirit is certainly conscious of the fact of this second birth, as the mother is of the first or natural birth, but the person himself may not be thus conscious, just as the child is not self-conscious of its natural birth. The child has natural life, though it does not know it as a truth rising out of the depth of

its consciousness, and the believer may have spiritual life and yet not be consciously certain of its presence and activities. At first, he is a mere "babe in Christ." The principle of the Divine life may be weak and struggling in him, and may and must war with deep-rooted and vigorous sinful propensities; but its existence in his heart is altogether independent of his consciousness of its presence. We do not say that God never, in any instance, gives the believer this certain hope of spiritual life in his heart. We think He may give it as a special source of strength to brace him to face special arduous duties. "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." But to say that our salvation depends upon our consciousness of possessing that salvation, is to teach gross, dangerous, delusive error. Paul should then have said to the Philippian jailer, "*Believe that thou believest on the Lord Jesus Christ*, and thou shalt be saved."

Returning again to the subject of baptism, it is desirable that we remember that the simple and Scriptural meaning of the ordinance is that it is typical of regeneration or the washing away of

sin. It has no higher, no holier import. It brings no grace to the soul. Being a type, it should precede, not follow, the baptism of the Spirit. It should go before the second birth. This is certainly its true position as a religious type. In all cases, when the archetype has been revealed and received, the type falls into disuse, and is laid aside; therefore, the laws of Scriptural thought teach us that baptism with water should precede baptism with the Spirit, and in the baptism of infants the type occupies its proper place.

It is objected that, as baptism is called a sacrament or oath, it should not be administered to children, who are naturally unable to understand the meaning of an oath, and are, therefore, unable to understand baptism, if, indeed, it be an oath. But the term sacrament or oath is unscriptural. It has come to us from the Romish Church, and expresses an idea altogether foreign to baptism. There is no oath in the ordinance. It is quite true that children are unconscious of the meaning of baptism when they are baptized, yet not more so than were Jewish children when they were

circumcised; and circumcision had a meaning just as religious and as spiritual as baptism, for it was typical of "the circumcision made without hands."

The benefits of baptism to children consist in this, that thereby they are put under the care of the Church as her spiritual wards; that the parents promise before God and man to train up their little ones "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," and to faithfully educate them for His service on earth. It may be said that the vows laid upon parents are too heavy, and are rarely performed, but the baptizer does not lay on vows of his own making; he finds certain parental duties revealed and laid down in the Bible, and he reminds the parents of these; and, although he should not say a word on the subject, the parents are bound all the same. In baptism, parents do not promise that their children shall grow up regenerated boys and girls, but that they will perform their duty towards them, humbly trusting that God will graciously bless their efforts.

We shall close this chapter by submitting a

few plain questions to our opponents, respectfully requesting them to give to each a simple, conscientious answer:—

1. As children were entitled to membership in the Jewish Church by circumcision, and as the Jewish and Christian Churches form the one "kingdom of God," will the Anabaptist show us a passage in either the Old or the New Testament where this right to membership has been repealed, and where the children of Christian parents are declared as unworthy to be received into "the kingdom of God?"

2. As circumcision and baptism teach the same spiritual doctrine, and are both the initiatory rite of the visible Church under different dispensations, will the Anabaptist show us why the children of Jewish parents could be circumcised, although incapable of understanding the ceremony, and yet the children of Christian parents should be refused baptism, because incapable of understanding its meaning?

3. If children are to be refused baptism because incapable of intelligent belief, will the Anabaptist show us why they should not also be refused food,

since the Apostle says, "This we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." (2 Thess. iii., 10.)

4. Does not the Anabaptist, by severing all ecclesiastical connection between parent and child, condemn God, who said of the uncircumcised man-child, "That soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant?" Yet that child broke the covenant only through the disobedience and neglect of his parents.

5. When a child is born of Christian parents, will the Anabaptist tell us what is its exact ecclesiastical standing? Is it a heathen? A Jew? Or a Christian? What is it? Should it be taught the Lord's Prayer? Or should we forbid it to say, "Our Father which art in heaven?"

6. As baptism is a type of spiritual purification, will the Anabaptist give us his reasons for delaying baptism until the thing typified is supposed to have come?

7. Will the Anabaptist show us a single instance in all the New Testament of the proselyte baptism, that is, the believer-baptism of one whose parents were members of the Christian Church at

the time of his birth? We have Scriptural warrant for the believer or proselyte-baptism of Jews and Gentiles, but not a shadow of proof for the adult-baptism of any one born in the Christian Church.

8. Can the Anabaptist harmonize his preaching, lecturing, catechizing, and cross-examining, which he inflicts for years on candidates for baptism, with the conduct of the apostles, who baptized after a single sermon or a short conversation, and that, too, Samaritans, and even benighted Gentiles?

9. Will the Anabaptist, who declares infant baptism to be an innovation, give us the date, and sketch the origin and history of this innovation? He is bound to do so; and until he be able, his assertion goes for empty breath. Tertullian is the first writer of whom we read who utters a word against the baptism of children, and he does not charge infant baptism with being an innovation that crept into the Church after the death of the apostles. Though he lived in the third century of our era, infant baptism had not at that period of the Church's history, assumed the character of

an innovation. It was reserved for Anabaptists of modern times to discover that infant baptism is a novelty. And the nearer we draw to the apostolic age, we find the friends and advocates of proselyte or believer-baptism less loud in their assertion that infant baptism is an innovation, till the accusing voice dies away, and not a whisper is heard on the subject.

Tertullian, indeed, opposes the baptism of children, but the value of his opposition is to be measured by the arguments he employs in support of his views. He says, "Considering every one's condition and disposition, and also his age, the delay of baptism is more advantageous, but especially in the case of little children. . . . Why should their innocent age make haste to the remission of sins? Men proceed more cautiously in worldly things; and he that is not trusted with earthly goods, why should he be trusted with divine? Let them know how to ask salvation, that you may appear to give it to one that asketh. For no less reason unmarried persons ought to be delayed, because they are exposed to temptation, as well as virgins that are come to maturity, as

those that are in widowhood and have little occupation, until they either marry or be confirmed in continence. They who know the weight of baptism will rather dread its attainment than its postponement." Such is the baptismal theology of the chief and champion foe of Pædobaptism in the third century, under the shadow of whose name the Anabaptist takes refuge, and whom he lauds as the earliest recorded opponent of the church membership of children. Tertullian was, in truth, a fit apostle of a system that is opposed to the best and holiest feelings of our nature—a system that is without moral beauty, without natural affection, without Christian kindness, and directly antagonistic to the spirit of Him who "gathers the lambs with his arm, and carries them in his bosom," and who said, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

10. The Anabaptist says there is no apostolic example of infant baptism. But will he show us an instance of the apostolic baptism of an adult who was born of Christian parents? or an apostolic baptism performed in the name of

the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost?

11. If the believer is to receive baptism, and the unbeliever to be refused it, will the Anabaptist point out the Scripture that denies baptism to a child, who is not an unbeliever, and who cannot yet believe, but who, as neither believing nor unbelieving, was received into the Jewish Church?

12. Will the Anabaptist put his finger on any passage in all the range of the New Testament where baptism is expressly restricted to believers and adults?

13. Will the Anabaptist inform us why he so fondly cherishes the sweet and cheering hope that his departed children join the invisible Church, as he regards them while living as unfit and unworthy to be received into the impure and visible Church?

CHAPTER IX.

THE MODE OF BAPTISM.

WE come now to consider the manner or mode in which Christian Baptism should be administered. Should it be *in* water or *with* water? The Pædobaptist regards the manner in which the water of the ordinance is brought into contact with the person, and the amount of water to be used, as non-essential to its right administration. He considers the religious import of the ceremony to be, not in the quantity of the liquid employed, but in the use of water in the hallowed name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. To the eye of his faith God's grace can be as grandly mirrored in a solitary drop of dew as in all the waves of all the seas that wash the many shores of earth. The Anabaptist thinks differently, and affirms that as to his mind the word baptizo (βαπτίζω) in classic Greek always signifies mode, and as that mode is *dipping*, therefore dipping

must have been in our Lord's thought, as the physical action by which a person should receive the initiatory rite of the Christian Church, when He commanded the apostles, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Waiving for the present the question—Is it in harmony with the spirit of the New Testament that Christians should be tied down to the letter of the mode in baptism? we shall briefly examine the correctness of the assertion that baptizo (βαπτίζω) signifies mode, and nothing but mode.

The position taken up by the recognized leader of the Anabaptist denomination in this controversy is, that baptizo (βαπτίζω) "always signifies to dip; never expressing anything but mode;" and then he adds, "As I have all the lexicographers and commentators against me in this opinion, it will be necessary to say a word or two with respect to the authority of lexicons." Clearly, then, if in one single instance it can be shown that baptizo (βαπτίζω) does not mean to dip—that it cannot mean to dip—while it expresses

literal contact with water, this Anabaptist bulwark—this controversial battlement—falls to the ground, and crumbles into dust. Now, to dip means to put down into the water from above—it is motion from above towards the water. The mode in dipping is the putting down into the water, and if baptizo (βαπτίζω) means exclusively to dip, the action of going down into from above must be necessarily the action implied in the term, which should be transparently visible in the thought, standing in the forefront of the pictorial conception, as the modal import of the word.

In proceeding to prove this modal meaning of baptizo (βαπτίζω), Anabaptists quote Strabo, who describes the soldiers of Alexander as "marching a whole day through the tide, between the mountain Climax and the sea, *baptized up to the middle.*" This is one of the passages brought forward to prove that baptizo (βαπτίζω), means mode, and nothing but mode; and after all it is only a case of *wading* up to the middle. The historian says, "The troops were in the water, baptized up to the middle." In the first clause the soldiers are declared to be actually in the

water, and the second clause is not intended to tell us anything about the mode of their going into the water, but that the water reached up so high on their person—"baptized up to the middle." It is surely beyond question that *the being in* the water up to the middle does not express mode, but describes a state attainable in different ways, and, therefore, baptizo (*βαπτίζω*) cannot in this instance have a modal import.

Another example of the alleged modal meaning of baptizo (Βαπτίζω) is found in Aristotle, and is thus rendered, "The Phœnicians, who inhabit Cadiz, relate that, sailing beyond Hercules' Pillars, in four days, with the wind at east, they came to a land uninhabited, whose coast was full of sea-weed, and is not baptized under water at ebb, but when the tide comes in, it is wholly covered and overwhelmed." The Anabaptist finds it difficult to retain the modal meaning of dipping in the baptizing of the rocky sea line, and not able to dip it literally, he tries hard to explain away the literality of the expression. He draws forth the glass of imagination, and, looking through it, exclaims, "The peculiar beauty of the expression

consists in figuring the object, which is successively bare and buried under water, as being dipped when it is covered, and as emerging when it is bare." This explanation, however, charges Aristotle with being guilty of forming "a very clumsy and unnatural connection between the proper sense of one term, and the figurative acceptation of another." We will not subscribe to the Anabaptist beauty of the expression, but hold to the plain, simple, natural meaning of the words, which tell us that when the tide is out the sea-coast is not baptized—implying, that when the tide is in the rocks are baptized. Yet when the tide comes in the water rushes over the rocks, but the rocks are not lowered into the sea and dipped. But dip, as mode, must be attended with the action of lowering into; and there can be no dipping without a descending into; but rocks cannot be lowered, so that the sea-line was not dipped, yet it was baptized at high water.

We confess this controversy is painful to us, and, were it not thrust upon us by the persistent efforts of Anabaptists, we would never touch it. Wrangling about the quantity of water to be used in this ecclesiastical rite, is not worthy men who

call themselves followers of Christ. And for the following reasons we are unable to sympathize with their views.

1. It has not been shown that, in classic Greek, baptizo (Βαπτίζω) means mode, and nothing but mode. Pagan literature has been ransacked, the dust wiped off musty volumes, and laborious days and nights have been spent in searching for evidence that the word has but one signification, and that that is to dip. And, as the result of this investigation, the most scholarly of all the writers on the Anabaptist side has been forced to confess that "the word, perhaps, does not so necessarily express the action of putting under water, as in general a thing being in that condition, no matter how it comes to be so, whether it is put into the water, or the water comes over it."

2. Even though it could be shown that heathen writers employed the term baptizo (Βαπτίζω) in only one sense, using it always to signify mode, we would not be bound, as Christians, on that account, to hold to this one modal meaning of the word as expressing a Gospel ordinance. The New Testament lays no stress on the mere carnal

part of a ceremonial observance. Our Lord never taught his disciples to be slaves to the letter of an ordinance; yet the Anabaptist Church is, in great part, founded on the mere letter of baptism. And, strange to say, while it holds to the letter in baptism, it drops it in the Supper. Upon equal authority the two names of baptism and the Supper have been given to two ordinances of the Christian Church. Christ has called the one baptism, and an inspired apostle has called the other the Supper. But supper is an evening meal, and the letter of time is as truly in it as the letter of mode is in baptism. If baptism means a dipping into a fluid, supper means an eating in the evening. Why does the Anabaptist adhere to the letter in the one ordinance, and reject it in the other? As the letter of time is dropped in the Supper, and a little bread and a sip of wine are universally held to be sufficient to give to the ordinance the character of a spiritual feast; in like manner, the letter of mode should be dropped in baptism, and a few drops of water are quite enough to represent the typical, spiritual import of the rite.

3. The benefits of baptism are not connected with the physical influence of water on the body. The spirit of the ordinance is to be found in the doctrine of moral purification that underlies the water of baptism, and not in the way in which the water comes into contact with the person. To represent purification, the entire body does not need to be put under water. To teach the disciples a lesson of humility and also of purity, our Lord on one occasion washed their feet. And when he came to Simon Peter, to perform on him the symbolic action, he objected, saying, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." To which Peter impetuously replied, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." But Christ taught him then, and taught all men with him, that in symbolic purification water applied to part of the body is quite sufficient. He said, "He that is washed, needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." Now, baptism is an emblem of purification, and therefore it is not necessary that the person baptized be submerged in the baptizing element, for the spiritual

significance of the ordinance lies in the application of water, whether much or little, in the sacred name of the Trinity.

4. There is not an instance of baptism recorded in the New Testament that necessarily implies immersion—nay, on the other hand, there are weighty difficulties surrounding the Anabaptist interpretation of the mode. On the day of Pentecost, three thousand souls were added to the church—that is, three thousand were baptized that very day; and this was done in a hostile city, where water was precious, and where the disciples' steps were keenly watched by the enemy. To suppose that the apostles and these three thousand were permitted, in open day, in the city of Jerusalem, to wade into, and dip in, and, therefore, defile the reservoirs of the place, baffles all unprejudiced belief.

As Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch travelled over "the desert," the latter espying water, exclaimed, "See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?" If he meant baptism by dipping many things might have hindered him, for the Anabaptist cannot baptize in every pool of

water he may chance to see. The water might have been too shallow or too deep, or the stream too narrow to admit his body. But none of these difficulties seem to have presented themselves to the mind of Philip, and this is presumptive evidence that the Apostle was a Pædobaptist.

Paul was three days and three nights that he neither eat nor drank, and yet in that weak state he was baptized; and, indeed, so weak was he from fasting and from agony of spirit, that special note is taken of the effect food had upon him, for it is said, "when he had received meat, he was strengthened." Let the Anabaptist fast three days, and during that time suffer the mental grief Paul suffered, and then let him try how physically fit he is to submit to dipping. Besides, Paul was baptized in the chamber in which Ananias found him; for though it is said, "he arose, and was baptized," it is not said that after he arose, and before he was baptized, and that in order to receive baptism, he and Ananias left the apartment. When the question is asked, How could immersion be performed in a chamber? the answer given is, "Paul was *bathed in baptism*,

therefore he was immersed." But to assume that Paul was bathed in baptism is to beg the question in debate, and to take as proved that which has to be proved.

5. As an ordinance of the Church, immersion is opposed to the genial spirit of Christianity. This consideration will not have much weight, I am aware, on the minds of our opponents, who glory in the cross of baptism, and seem to think there is some special blessing in their mode of it, because of its repugnance to the finer feelings of a delicate and sensitive nature. Immersion, in itself, viewed altogether apart from its ecclesiastical character, is an unseemly exhibition, from which modesty in man, and most of all in woman, naturally shrinks. Divest the act of its ecclesiastical character, and look upon it from a standpoint where prejudice shall not disturb the mind and affect the judgment. Would the Anabaptist husband or father like to see his wife or daughter, loosely attired in a bathing-dress, dipped by a man in a stream, a pond, or river? Would he deem it a seemly performance, and very conducive to public morality? We affirm that, stripping the

immersion of the Anabaptist Church of its religious character, it involves an unseemly physical act; and if the admission of Anabaptists themselves be correct, then their ecclesiastical progenitors made their mode of baptism still more indelicate by submitting to it divested of all clothing. In addition to the natural indelicacy of immersion, nervous females have fainted in the baptistry or have gone into fits; and some have even caught death therein; and not a few Anabaptists live and die without receiving the initiatory rite of the Church, because deterred by mortal fear from stepping down into those terrible waters of baptism. Can this be the mode of an ordinance appointed by Christ as the door of admission into His Church?

6. In addition to these considerations, the word baptizo (βαπτίζω) occurs once in the New Testament in connection with water, where it cannot by any possibility mean dipping in the water. The Apostle says, "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto

Moses in the cloud and in the sea." (1 Cor. x., 1-2.) Our opponents admit this baptism to have been "a real immersion—the sea stood on each side, and the cloud covered them," yet they say, "it was not a literal immersion in water." But where was its reality, if it was not literal? If the people were really immersed, must they not have been literally immersed? Surely the one term implies the other. Israel was baptized passing through the Red Sea; but that baptism was not dipping, for Moses says, "The children of Israel went into the midst of the sea *upon dry ground.*" (Ex. xiv., 22.) Upon the admission even of the Anabaptist, the Israelites were really baptized, and upon the testimony of Moses rests the impossibility of that baptism having been by immersion, so that there is here a real baptism where immersion is a sheer impossibility. Forget, for a moment, the alleged modal meaning of baptizo (βαπτίζω), and remember Paul says the people were baptized, and ask yourself was it possible that water in any great quantity came into contact with their bodies? Looking into the inspired narrative, we find that "the Lord

caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all night" (Ex. xiv., 21), and "The depths were troubled." (Psalm lxxvii., 16.) The natural consequence of this storm would be that the people, passing through the divided sea, would be sprinkled with the spray from the troubled waters. This sprinkling was the baptism of the people.

Israel had two baptisms as they passed through the Red Sea, "and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." The cloud and the sea are quite distinct, and are entirely independent of each other. Israel was baptized in the cloud, and Israel was baptized in the sea. The cloud baptized, and the sea baptized. That there was a real baptism with the cloud is as true as that there was a real cloud, but as there could be no literal dipping in the cloud, the baptism must have been by pouring. That there was rain from the clouds during the passage of the Red Sea, is put beyond doubt by the words of the Psalmist, "The clouds poured out water." (Psalm lxxvii., 17. There was spray from the stormy sea, and there was rain from the vapoury cloud, and these baptized them

in the New Testament sense of the term, so that the word baptizo (βαπτίζω) refuses to be restricted to dip.

The Anabaptist grows very imaginative as he ponders on this passage through the sea. He discovers that the channel of the deep was transformed into a huge baptistry, the walls of water on either side representing the sides of his favourite bath, and the overhanging cloud corresponding to the baptizing element. If we were disposed to follow out this thought, we might naturally enough inquire in what direction the water of baptism would come? Must it not be from above? But, we are told, baptism means to dip, and nothing but to dip; yet the people could not have been dipped in the cloud—the cloud must have come down upon them, so that the action of baptizing, even upon the Anabaptist supposition, could not have been dipping, but a coming upon.

7. The mode of baptism, as the initiatory rite of the Church, is illustrated by the way in which the Spirit is represented as coming upon man in the Divine baptism. God speaks of the Spirit as

being poured or shed from heaven upon the soul. He is said to distil as the dew, and to fall as the rain, and as all these expressions represent the baptism of the Spirit, we may surely conclude that mode is not essential to the right administration of baptism with water. Anabaptists try hard to parry the force of this argument by distinguishing between the giving of the Spirit, as represented in the promise that He should be poured out, and the result of that giving, which they call the baptism. This distinction between the giving of the Spirit and the work of the Spirit in the heart, is neither more nor less than a raising of dust to blind the eyes. In immersion there is the dipping in the water, and then there is the result of that dipping in the shape of wet clothes, perhaps of a cold, and consumption, and death. Will our opponents admit that water baptism is not in the dipping, but in the results of the dipping? They agree with us in regarding the coming of the water on the person as baptism—why, then, do they deny that the coming of the Spirit is the baptism? The result of the Spirit's coming is the Spirit's fruit; but the fruit is not the baptism;

and if the result of the Spirit's coming be baptism in the one case, the result of the dipping, and not the very dipping itself, must be baptism in the other.

It may be urged that, as the baptism of the Spirit lies in the region of metaphor, we have no right to draw an argument from it in favour of the mode of baptism with water. Suppose we grant this, we have revealed, however, a supernatural baptism that has as literal and as physical an element as water. We allude to the baptism with fire on the day of Pentecost. John the Baptist foretold that our Lord should baptize "with the Holy Ghost and with fire." This was a prophecy of a double baptism, which was fulfilled at Pentecost. On that occasion there were two baptisms. One was with the Holy Ghost, and the other was with tongues of supernatural fire, visible to the eye of the beholder—"There appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." Now, fire is as literal an emblem of the Spirit's baptism as water. How, then, did the fire come? Remember it was a *baptism of fire.* Were they dipped in it? No, but it came upon

them—"it sat upon each of them." God here baptized with fire, but He did not immerse in it—it came upon them; they were not dipped in it.

8. It is alleged that, as water baptism should be a sign or representation of our Lord's death and burial, therefore immersion is its proper and significant mode. The passages of Scripture adduced in defence of this opinion are in Romans and Colossians, where the apostle says, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death: therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. vi., 3, 4); and again, "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." (Col. ii., 11-12.) What baptism is referred to in these passages? In the Christian Church there are two baptisms—the one is

typical, and the other is the thing typified. Now, typical or water baptism has no saving influence whatever, and is simply a ceremonial of the flesh, utterly inefficacious to communicate spiritual good; but the baptism of the Spirit purifies and elevates, and is richly laden with the grace of God. To which baptism is it likely, then, the apostle alludes? Will he ground his motives for purity of life on a mere ceremonial ordinance, and overlook and ignore the strongest argument within the range of revealed truth? Such is not the usual logic of the far-seeing and sagacious apostle, who always selects the weapons of his rhetoric with consummate ability, and strikes home with the skill of an experienced veteran. Did he not tell the Corinthians that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal?" Did he not stir them up to holiness of life with this admonition, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" And is he now fallen back upon a mere rite of the flesh? No; it is, and it must be, this same spiritual indwelling of the Holy Ghost that he refers to when he says,

"Buried with him in baptism we are also raised with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." The persons here addressed are "circumcised with the circumcision made without hands," or they are "born again;" would it not then be miserable reasoning for Paul to say that these members of the Church, who are distinctly declared to be regenerated, should be very cautious of falling into sin, because they have been baptized with water? If they are regenerated persons, it is because they are regenerated that they should resist and overcome temptation, and not because they were either sprinkled with or dipped in water in the ceremonial rite of water baptism. Besides, the apostle's language plainly teaches that all the professed members of the Roman Church had not received the baptism to which he alludes. He says, "Know ye not, *that so many of us* as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death." Yet no one can be a member of the Christian Church until he has received its initiatory rite; and all, therefore, in the Roman Church must have received water baptism; but

it is not of all such the apostle speaks, but only of those who had been baptized by the Spirit into the death of the Son of God.

Even if these passages referred to baptism with water, dipping would not be necessary to teach the Church the doctrine that baptism symbolizes the washing away of sin by the Saviour's blood. A Pædobaptist understands the spiritual meaning of baptism quite as well as an Anabaptist. He does not need to plunge beneath baptismal waters that he may perceive and realize the idea of human guiltiness, and appreciate the purifying power of Jesus' blood. The drops of water that fall upon the brow at baptism, convey to his mind as fully and as forcibly, as the deep waters of immersion to the Anabaptist, the sad thought of human sinfulness, and the exhilarating hope of pardoning mercy through the precious blood of the Sacred Victim of the Crimson Cross. The Pædobaptist believes that the baptism he advocates and practises is in exact accordance with the genial spirit of Christianity; that it is a baptism that even the most delicate may submit to without injury; that the fair cheek of modesty need never blush at the

thought of it; and that it is a rite which can bind, without any inconvenience from clime, the coloured son of the arid desert and the shivering tenant of polar regions to the throne of the Father of All. In accordance with the genial spirit of our pure, fresh, holy Christianity, the Pædobaptist may well affirm that baptism by effusion does seem to be the apostolic, the Christ-like mode of an ordinance that belongs to our universal Faith.

Our task is now done; our work is finished; the result we leave with God. In a candid spirit, searching for the priceless truth, coveting it as the thirsty man does water from the rock, we have investigated the perplexed topic of Christian Baptism, both in its mode and its subjects. If an unkind or offensive word has dropped from our pen in the writing of these pages, no one can regret it more than we do ourselves. We war with opinions and principles, not with names and persons. It has been our constant aim, second only to the discovering of the truth, to conduct our inquiry in a spirit becoming a Christian writer, and worthy a Christian public. We trust we

have not been altogether unsuccessful in presenting our views in a gentle, genial way, without wounding another's feelings; yet withal, freely, fully, firmly, not avoiding a difficulty, nor shunning an argument. The truth is on our side; it is with us. We have not the slightest fear but that the Pædobaptist cause will be ultimately successful. Our faith in God's righting all things, and weaving the wreath of victory round the shining brow of truth at last, is too strong to permit us for a moment to falter in our allegiance to the views advocated in these pages. Yet it is true that error is of very ancient date indeed, and no way slothful in sowing its seed. It is a hydra-headed monster, with a dash of immortality about it. For a time it may stalk the earth—may blow on fame's brazen trump—may flaunt its gaudy colours in the dim and shadowy twilight, and proudly sit on a throne of trammelled thought, while truth lies beaten, bound, imprisoned—the child of many sorrows, the butt for many a venomed arrow. But no weapon formed against the truth shall prosper. Truth shall and must prevail, and the sword that strikes her the

Almighty shall transform, shivered into a string of superb pearls, and hang it round her virgin neck, as an ornament of her queenly beauty, and a trophy of her all-enduring triumph.

"Truth, struck to earth, shall rise again,
The eternal years of God are hers;
But Error, wounded, writhes with pain,
And dies amid her worshippers."

That the Anabaptist's notions on the subject of baptism are wrong we are as convinced as that the Bible came from God, and our daily grief is, that the Foe of Truth and Unity has been so successful in breaking up the Church into hostile camps, occupying opposing hills, and viewing each other with suspicion and distrust. Would there was more harmony of thought, more unity of action in the disunited Church of the Redeemer! Yet, amid all this conflict of opinions, we can stretch out the right hand of fellowship to the Church of Bunyan, Hall, and Foster, and of many other noble-minded, large-hearted, princely-souled men, giving her the warm grasp of sacred fellowship, while we drop a tear and

heave a sigh over her deplorable schismatic imperfections. We are at one with her as regards the saving doctrines of our glorious Christianity. Our common faith is gazing earnestly "through the dim curtains of futurity." We have one great, one immortal hope—

> "A bridge of rainbows, thrown across
> This vale of tears and sighs,"

one end resting on our cradle, the other on our grave, and spanning all our little life that humbly lies between.

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